Great Britain
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Wm Vaughan
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ON THE

DEBT OF THE NATION,

COMPARED WITH

ITS REVENUE;

AND THE

IMPOSSIBILITY OF CARRYING ON THE WAR

WITHOUT

PUBLIC OECONOMY.

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THE

CONTENTS.

Page

INTRODUCTION. 1

CHAP. I. *On the national debt.* 13

CHAP. II. *Of the annual revenues for the ſupport of government, and the charge of collecting them.* 36

CHAP. III. *Some obſervations on the commiſſioners reports, and on the expenditures for the civil liſt.* 55

CHAP. IV. *Strictures on the navy and army expences, compared with their amount in the laſt war.* 82

CHAP. V. *Concluſion.* 109

ERRATA.

Page 57, in the note, ſecond line from the bottom; for *and* read 9.

Page 59, line 9, for *people's* read *public.*

INTRODUCTION.

THE deſign of theſe ſheets is, to frame a clear and diſtinct account of the different branches of the national revenues and reſources, the modes of collecting or procuring them; and the cauſes on which the revenues depend for their increaſe or decline; and thereby enable the public to judge of the proſpect there is for their continuance at the preſent annual amount; under the circumſtances in which the nation and its trade now ſtand. I ſhall likewiſe make ſome remarks on the mode of iſſuing the revenues from the public treaſury, and on the expenditures for the navy and army: So that individuals, of whatever complexion, or wherever led by reflection, or prejudice in political opinions, may diſcover the reſources and condition of their country, and be able to determine, whether any real grounds exiſt to alarm us for our opulence

and ſafety. And if they do, from what errors and miſtakes in our conduct, the dangers and diſtreſſes, which hang over us, have aroſe.

The exchequer of a great nation can never be conducted upon the ſame narrow principles of œconomy, whereby the tradeſman neceſſarily regulates his counter. But it ſhould nevertheleſs be remembered by thoſe entruſted with the public purſe, that neither the ſafety or protection of the empire, nor the dignity of the crown, or the ſplendor of majeſty, in the leaſt depend on a careleſs profuſion, a laviſh expenditure of the national wealth.

The great executive officers of the ſtate, who are appointed by the Sovereign, and removeable at his pleaſure, being entruſted with the diſpoſition of the revenue for the ſeveral uſes of government, for the King's houſhold, and all the other branches of the civil liſt, are the perſons reſponſible to the people for the expenditure of the money belonging to the public.

A ſpecific ſum having been granted to ſupport the civil liſt, the Parliament, I apprehend, would be conſidered as acting diſreſpectfully towards their Sovereign, to examine into, or in any wiſe interfere with the diſpoſal of that ſum; ſo long as his Majeſty's ſervants were attentive to make it provide for the ſervices for which it was given.

given. But if the money ſhall be rendered inſufficient to anſwer theſe uſes, either by neglect or inattention, or by being perverted to other purpoſes, the civil liſt expenditure then moſt undoubtedly becomes an object of parliamentary enquiry.

However, the collection of the whole of the revenue, and the expenditure of thoſe ſums granted for the navy and military eſtabliſhments, and other charges of government, not included in the civil liſt, theſe ſhould be truly and clearly accounted for to the people, from year to year: for it has been the invariable practice of Parliament, to grant the money of their conſtituents for expreſſed purpoſes, and to be applied to no other uſes whatever. To grant the people's money on any looſer terms, might be dangerous to a great degree: for if the uſe to which the money is to be applied ſhall not be expreſſed, how are the people to judge if it ſhall be wiſe to give? or, after having given, how are they to learn if it has been faithfully applied?

No miniſter has yet been ſo wicked, and at the ſame time bold enough to aſſert, he was not accountable, for the expenditure of the public purſe, to thoſe who gave it. Therefore, whatever evaſive reaſons may be uſed at any time to delay the inveſtigation of the national accounts, and to ſatisfy the unſuſpicious temper of the people; the great executive ſervants of the Crown can aſſign

no juſt ſubſtantial motives to exculpate their want of duty to the public, whenever they ſhall have neglected to arrange their accounts with ſufficient method and perſpicuity, to ſhew plainly to the people, in the next ſeſſion, if the money voted in the former had been applied to the ſpecific articles of expence for which it had been granted.

The people granting money for particular uſes, they had power to withhold, and afterwards to be denied an explanation of the expenditure, would be making a mere mockery of the rights of the ſubject: becauſe their money might, in ſuch caſe, as eaſily be applied by bad miniſters in purſuit of falſe glory, or to undermine the conſtitution; as, under wiſe and honeſt miniſters, to the protection and proſperity of the empire, and the ſecurity of the private rights of the ſubject.

Therefore a clear arrangement of the public accounts, as ſhall ſhew the expenditure of the revenues, ſhould be annually laid before Parliament; that the Commons might be able to ſatisfy the people, whether the grants of the preceding ſeſſion had been faithfully applied to thoſe ſpecific uſes, for which the money had been aſked and given.

I muſt here obſerve, that ſuch an account is the more neceſſary, ſince Miniſters have fallen into a practice of running the nation in debt by their own authority, without the

warrant of Parliament; I mean, in the articles of the navy and army extraordinaries.

Whereas the faithful application of the people's money, taking care to incur no debts but what they ſhall legally be authorized to contract, can only juſtify the ſervants of the Crown, entruſted with the national purſe: and there ſeems to lay the great conſtitutional ground, the Miniſters of this country ought always to tread on. How then can thoſe be juſtified, who, after having repeatedly framed eſtimates for the ſucceeding year, at the cloſe of the former, ſhall have been ſo inattentive to the nature of the ſervice, as to ſuffer, as repeatedly, the amount of the eſtimates, at the end of each reſpective year, to have been ſeveral millions ſhort of the actual expence? This aſſertion, the extraordinaries for the army and navy will confirm; for they have been ſwelled to an enormous amount in the preſent, far beyond the ſame unjuſtifiable mode of proceeding in the former war. Such conduct on the part of the Miniſters, is in fact running the public in debt without legal authority; making the cuſtom of fixing bounds to votes of credit a ridiculous ceremony.

The extraordinaries for the army, at leaſt, were more excuſeable in the former, than in the preſent war; becauſe the difficulty of accounting, and of controul, became much greater from the Hanoverian chancery, and a foreign

a foreign Commander in Chief, in Germany: nevertheleſs, the unauthorized expences, under the head of army extraordinaries, have exceeded, in the preſent, thoſe of the preceding war, beyond all compariſon. The navy extraordinaries have been ſwelled in a great degree, to the preſent very extenſive and unprecedented amount, from no regular proviſion having been made, through this war, for the army tranſport, and victualling ſervices; which, in the former, were regularly provided for in the votes, at the end of each year; but during this, have lain involved in the navy debt: thereby throwing into the vortex of the navy (always a favourite expence, becauſe ſo eſſential to the public ſafety) a charge that Miniſters might perhaps wiſh to leſſen or conceal, for fear of alarming the nation by its amount.

Annual eſtimates, ſo very inadequate to the expences ſure to be incurred from ſuch diſtant warfare on land, can only ariſe either from ignorance or neglect in the official departments of government; or elſe be done to prevent the public from being ſenſible of the enormity of the expence, before they ſtood committed for the diſcharge; leſt reflection might have led the nation to repent too ſoon of their concurrence in a meaſure, ſure, if it failed, to reduce the ſtrength, and be deſtructive of the commerce, of Great Britain.

Without

Without the repreſentatives of the people ſhall be made acquainted with the probable extent of the year's expence, how can Parliament be enabled, from time to time, to judge if the purſuit deſerves the charge likely to be incurred to ſupport it? which the power to withhold the ſupplies, gives them, in fact, a decided right to determine on.

Hence it is evident, that if the repreſentatives of the people ſhall permit ſuch enormous debts, contracted in ſo unconſtitutional a manner, to paſs unreproved; and remain ſatisfied with a ſummary account of the expenditure of the grants and extraordinaries of the former year, without calling for proofs or documents, to remove ſuch doubts and miſapprehenſions as may be ſtarted in the Houſe, by any of its Members; but, on the contrary, rather negative the meaſure that would tend to inform and elucidate:—I ſay, if a majority of the Commons were to proceed, on any occaſion, in this manner, ſuch majority muſt be conſidered as acting contrary to the duties of their truſt, and furniſh ſtrong grounds for ſuſpicion, that ſome undue influence had operated on their minds. Therefore, if the Commons ſhall at any time become ſo ſubſervient to the Miniſters, as to vote freſh ſupplies, relying on the general aſſertion, unaccompanied with any clear, ſatisfactory accounts,

accounts, that all the former grants were expended, and ſtill further debts contracted; the people would be fully juſtified to call on their repreſentatives, to give them an account of the expenditure of the former grants, and likewiſe of any extraordinary debts incurred without their conſent or knowledge, before they voted freſh ſupplies.

If, from corruption, or other improper motive, the repreſentatives of the people ſhould be induced to treat ſo juſt and lawful a requiſition with contempt, the only remedy would then lay in a calm, but firm addreſs from the ſubject to the Sovereign, praying his Majeſty will graciouſly pleaſe to diſſolve an aſſembly, who ſhall have violated their truſt, and deceived both him and his people.

I apprehend, by the laws and conſtitution of this country, the executive power to be lodged ſolely in the Crown, and that neither the people or their repreſentatives have a voice in conducting it. And I apprehend alſo, that the reſponſibility lays with thoſe officers his Majeſty ſhall, in his wiſdom, call to his councils, and entruſt with the executive departments of the ſtate.

But, as no material operations can be carried into effect without ſupplies of money; and as thoſe ſupplies are free and voluntary gifts from the people, given through their repreſentatives,

repreſentatives, for the common benefit; the withholding ſuch ſupplies muſt immediately ſtop any meaſures of the executive power, that ſhould appear liable, in their conſequences, to be hurtful to the nation. Therefore the particular purpoſes are always ſtated in the eſtimates, and declared in the votes, for which money has from time to time been granted.

Theſe circumſtances ſurely make it incumbent on the Commons, to be informed, from their own enquiries and reſearches, whether the money has been faithfully applied to the uſes for which it had been given. And it is likewiſe the duty of the Commons, to take care that no expences are ever incurred by the ſervants of the Crown, to any conſiderable amount, without their ſanction having been firſt obtained.

If ever national œconomy was neceſſary, it muſt be at ſuch an alarming criſis as the preſent, when we are haſtily deſcending from our towering height; not, as ſome have argued, to ſit down ſafe and contented in a narrower circle; but to find ourſelves, in that narrower circle, encompaſſed with numerous diſtreſſes, weighed down by a preſſure of debt, having our anceſtors', as well as our own, to provide for, which former miſmanagement has prevented from be-

ing reduced; and our preſent folly and imprudence is enlarging—at a time when our foreign commerce, and its carriage, the ſources of all our wealth, are failing; ſources to which we owe that maritime ſtrength, whereby we have long reſiſted the moſt formidable combinations, and held the lead upon the ocean. However, under theſe, or worſe circumſtances, that debt, let me remind the landholders, muſt have ſome faith and regard ſhewn to it, or our national credit will be gone for ever.

My countrymen, we ought to remember, a period will arrive, when this great debt, if we continue thus to increaſe it, can no longer be transferred to poſterity. And it behoves us to take care, that we are not the generation to receive the blow.

In order to inveſtigate, in a clear and comprehenſive manner, the public revenue, its operations and effects, it becomes neceſſary to proceed with caution and candour to the enquiry: tracing the riſe and progreſs of our great national debt, and the ſupplies reſerved, from time to time, for its intereſt and reduction; and what revenues have remained, and are likely to remain in future, for the exigencies of the ſtate; and on what reſources thoſe revenues depend. Searching likewiſe into the waſte, neglect, or miſmanagement that may prevail, either

in

in the collection or expenditure of the public revenue; what undue influence may be eradicated, which has gathered round the executive power, from time and accidental circumſtances; ariſing out of the vaſt number of dependents upon government, from appointments annexed to *levies, debts, diſtributions*, and *obſolete eſtabliſhments:* ſo that every perſon may have ſufficient materials to be enabled to draw concluſions, as to future conſequences; and to conſider whether any material reform might take place, conſiſtent with the *dignity and character of a great nation.* Thus circumſtanced, with truth to guide men's judgments, they would ſeldom be found to differ in opinions. It is the artful perverſion of truth, that leads men to draw falſe concluſions; and produces thoſe various ſentiments, formed according to the medium of error through which they have been drawn.

The revenues ariſe out of cuſtoms, and various articles of exciſe, with ſundry inland duties, all of which are made perpetual; and likewiſe from the land-tax, and the exciſe on malt, which are voted only from year to year.

The application of theſe revenues is to be found in the intereſt paid on the public loans; in the diſcharge of the civil liſt expences; and of thoſe incurred for the navy,

the army, the ordnance, and their dependent branches; and in thoſe contingent expences, conducted at the treaſury board, under the heads of contracts and agencies of various kinds.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

ON THE NATIONAL DEBT.

I SHALL, in the firſt place, take a review of the public debts, from their origin to the preſent day: which debts, for the reduction of the capital, depend ſolely on the ſurplus of the revenues, or annual income, after the peace eſtabliſhment ſhall have been provided for.

The debt commenced in the reign of King William; the annual income being inſufficient to ſupport the expence of the wars in which the nation were then involved; the Commons, therefore, to avoid oppreſſive levies, borrowed from individuals the ſum wanted to compleat the year's expences, beyond what the annual taxes could ſupply. In order to obtain theſe loans, the faith of Parliament became pledged for the intereſt agreed on between the ſtate and the lender; and certain duties, or taxes, were mortgaged for that purpoſe. Theſe loans were made either irredeemable, with an intereſt proportioned to the lives or term; or elſe redeemable, and the intereſt not to ceaſe till the principal was repaid; which repayment

ment was only at the option of the legiſlature. The lender not having it in his power to reclaim his principal, conſtitutes the only difference between the public loans, and thoſe made by individuals with each other.

This ſyſtem of finance, or method of raiſing extraordinary ſupplies in time of war, has been invariably practiſed, under the different adminiſtrations, ſince the cloſe of the laſt century; whenever more money has been wanted for the neceſſities of the ſtate, than the annual amount of taxes would ſupply. In the reign of George I. the Miniſters and Parliament, alarmed at the growing extent of the national debt during the two former reigns, the better to provide for its future reduction, to ſtrengthen public credit, and to ſecure the confidence of monied men againſt future emergencies, eſtabliſhed the ſinking fund; which fund was to conſiſt of the ſurpluſſes ariſing from the duties or taxes mortgaged, from time to time, to pay the intereſt on different loans; therefore, when any ſurplus aroſe from among theſe ſpecific branches mortgaged, either by reduction of the intereſt, the expiration of the term for which it was appropriated, or by an increaſe of the branch of merchandize or conſumption out of which the duty or tax originated; theſe ſeveral ſurpluſſes were directed by the legiſlature to be thrown into one aggregate fund,

fund, in order to be yearly applied towards the diſcharge of the redeemable part of the debt; when the exigencies of government did not make it neceſſary for Parliament to appropriate the amount of the ſinking fund to anſwer the current expence of the year.

Both advantages and diſadvantages will be found to reſult from the preſent ſyſtem of finance, viewed in a national light; that is, as it may operate, in any degree, to affect either the commerce, or the conſtitution of our country.

By the advantages ariſing from this ſyſtem of finance, the ſtate has been enabled to procure much larger ſums within the year, in times of war, than could have been obtained, without great oppreſſions on the people, through any tax, aid, or ſubſidy; becauſe the intereſt, which is all that is ſettled by Parliament to be taken from the pocket of the ſubject, is not more than a ſeventeenth or twentieth part of the ſum wanted for the national exigencies of the year; which ſum, by theſe means, is voluntarily lent by individuals to the ſtate, the faith of Parliament being only pledged for the intereſt of the money borrowed.

From the funds eſtabliſhed by theſe debts, an immediate intereſt became at all times attainable for the ſuperfluous wealth of the kingdom; whereby hoarding of money no longer prevails, even with the moſt timid; and

and the miſer is induced to bring his wealth into circulation, and, though uſeleſs to himſelf, makes it of ſervice to ſociety, without uſury or extortion.

The funds have furniſhed an eaſy exchange for property: the bank, eſtabliſhed upon this ſyſtem, introduced the circulation of paper; and, by the ſafety and ſecurity of its notes, procured by degrees a credit, which extended to every corner of the kingdom; affording thereby great aſſiſtance to the inland trade, and to commerce in general; by the ſubſtitutes afforded for the barter and exchange of merchandize of all ſorts.

The bank, whoſe credit, from its ſituation and engagements, is involved in the credit of the ſtate, will, I apprehend, preſerve the preſent confidence given to its paper, ſo long as the national debt ſhall be confined within proportional bounds to the influx of wealth, annually realized through our export trade. When any difficulties or embarraſſments ariſe with reſpect to the intereſt of the debt, the bank will in ſome degree feel the blow.

Government alſo have derived additional ſtrength and ſecurity from this debt, by individuals becoming more immediately intereſted in its ſupport.

On the other hand, the diſadvantages which have aroſe from this ſyſtem of finance are conſiderable, and call for much

care and attention on the part of our repreſentatives, to prevent dangerous conſequences ariſing to the conſtitution.

For the debt, created by this ſyſtem of finance, has furniſhed the executive power with that deſtructive weapon, *indirect influence*, through the appointments to offices of collection, and of the ſeveral arrangements for the management of that part of the revenue appropriated to pay the intereſt of the debt; of which the Miniſter becomes the acting truſtee, and the ſole channel to favour and indulgence in the diſtribution of every new loan. This ſyſtem, in order to provide, from time to time, for the increaſing debt, has created taxes, and burthens upon commerce, not to be removed or reduced, without wounding the faith of Parliament. It has accuſtomed the nation to be leſs alarmed at the amount of the ſum raiſed within the year; and conſequently leſs concerned about the expenditure; becauſe the public, at the making of the bargain for a loan, feel only the weight of the intereſt, which has frequently been not more than a twentieth part of the ſum raiſed; ſo that the burthen may, in great meaſure, be ſaid to have been transferred from time to time to the ſhoulders of poſterity.

Theſe circumſtances too have contributed to make the gentlemen of landed property more indifferent of the appropriation of the

ſinking fund, from year to year; preferring the current expences, regardleſs either of the object or amount, to the reduction of the debt, if it ſaved a ſhilling in the pound on the land-tax. Beſides, the ſinking fund being once eſtabliſhed, the Miniſter could more eaſily obtain from Parliament the application of it to any favourite purpoſe, without too cloſe a ſcrutiny into his views, than the attainment of an equal ſum, for which no proviſion had been made.

Theſe are doubtleſs alarming circumſtances, being liable to work much evil to the conſtitution in the hands of bad Miniſters; having a natural tendency to feed corruption. But, at the ſame time, let us remember, that theſe evils cannot operate to any dangerous extent, except through the ſupineneſs and treachery of our repreſentatives. And a diligent, virtuous exertion on the part of our preſent Houſe of Commons, might ſoon correct thoſe miſchiefs, which any former Parliaments may have overlooked, connived at, or encouraged.

At the end of King William's reign, the public debt amounted to rather more than ſix millions and a half. Of this ſum, ſix hundred thouſand pounds and upwards had been borrowed in the reign of Charles II. The loans in William's reign were made at an intereſt of eight or nine *per cent. per annum*, owing to the ſcarcity of money; which

which aroſe from the infancy of our foreign commerce, compared with its ſtate about fifty or ſixty years afterwards. For though the act of navigation, made in the reign of Charles II. ſo well calculated to promote foreign commerce, was gathering ſtrength, yet at that time our trade had been carried to no great extent.

In December 1714, at the end of Queen Anne's reign, about thirteen years from the firſt period, the national debt came to forty-eight millions and a half; and the intereſt paid on it yearly came to two millions nine hundred and thirty-nine thouſand pounds. Of the forty-eight millions and a half, three millions eight hundred thouſand pounds were the debts of the former reigns; forty-one millions and a half had been really borrowed in Queen Ann's reign; and the remainder of the debt, amounting to three millions two hundred thouſand pounds, aroſe from compound intereſt on ſome exchequer bills, converted into principal; and a nominal capital of twenty-five *per cent.* engrafted on the actual loans of 1711 and 1714.

Expenſive as Queen Ann's wars have been generally conſidered, money was obtained at a lower intereſt, than in the former reign. For commerce had brought an addition of wealth into the kingdom ſince King William's time; and thereby extended circula-

tion; which had likewiſe been aſſiſted by the ſecurity given to bank paper.

In the years 1719 and 1720, three millions were added to that portion of the redeemable debt, engrafted into the South-Sea Company's fund, in return for the Company's buying up a conſiderable part of the irredeemable annuities, in order to make them redeemable; and by this addition to the capital, as it ſtood in December 1714, the amount of the debt came to fifty-one millions and a half.

In the year 1727, at the cloſe of George the Firſt's reign, the capital of the debt amounted to * fifty millions ſeven hundred thouſand pounds; in which were included ſix millions two hundred thouſand pounds given in the terms of ſome of the loans, being a nominal capital, and to be paid only on redemption. The annual intereſt, including the irredeemable annuities, came at this period to two millions three hundred and eighty thouſand pounds; ſo that, in the ſpace of fifteen or ſixteen years, the principal of the debt had been reduced near one million, and the annual intereſt paid on it five hundred and fifty-eight thouſand pounds †.

In

* Reckoning in the unfunded navy and victualling debts, to the amount of one million ſeven hundred and thirty-ſeven thouſand pounds.

† This reduction of intereſt aroſe from three thouſand

In the year 1739, the debt owing by the ſtate to individuals, amounted to * forty-five millions three hundred and thirty thouſand pounds, reckoning in the ſix millions two hundred thouſand pounds of nominal capital, mentioned to have been given in the terms of ſome of the loans. And the intereſt at the ſame time came to one million nine hundred and ſixty thouſand pounds.

Hence it appears, that in the ſpace of thirteen years from 1727, the principal of the debt became reduced near five millions and a half; and the annual intereſt † four hundred and twenty thouſand pounds.

The year 1739 was juſt before the commencement of the firſt war in George the Second's reign. In four years from the cloſe of that war, in December 1753, the

ſand pounds life annuities fallen in; from a conſiderable part of the long and ſhort annuities being made redeemable, with an addition of three millions of capital, in return for lowering the intereſt paid on the annuities. The remainder of the five hundred and fifty-eight thouſand pounds aroſe from the fall of intereſt, by the increaſe of money in the kingdom.

* Including the unprovided navy debt, to the amount of one million three hundred thouſand pounds.

† The reduction in the intereſt paid on the national debt, in the courſe of thirteen years, aroſe from between three and four thouſand pounds life annuities having fell in; from the payment of a part of the capital; and from the fall of intereſt, by the increaſe of money within the kingdom.

national

national debt amounted to * ſeventy-three millions ſix hundred and eighty thouſand pounds. Of this ſum, ſix millions two hundred thouſand pounds, mentioned in the former ſtatements, and one million, added to the loans in 1747 and 1748, were nominal capital. The intereſt of this debt, at the end of 1753, came to two millions ſix hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds a year: and the ſtatements in the margin ſhew, that in four years from the end of the war, the capital of the debt had been decreaſed one million and a half; and the intereſt ſe-

* Debt the end of 1753, — —	£. 73,680,000
Paid off from 1749 to 1753, at 4 *per cent.* — — —	1,200,000
D°, at 3 *per cent.* — — —	400,000
Debt at the end of the war, —	£. 75,280,000
Intereſt paid the end of 1753, —	£. 2,670,000
Annuities fallen in ſince 1739, — —	29,000
Capital paid off, at 4 *per cent.* — —	48,000
D°, at 3 ½ *per cent.* — — — —	14,000
	£. 2,761,000
Deduct intereſt 1739, — —	1,961,000
Intereſt increaſed by the war, —	£. 800,000
Capital of the debt in 1749, —	£. 75,280,000
Capital of d° in 1739, — —	45,330,000
Debt incurred by the war begun in 1740, — —	£. 29,950,000

venty thouſand pounds a year. And they alſo ſhew, that the war had added thirty millions, including a million of nominal capital, to the former debt; and that, from the reduction in the value of money, from the increaſe of commerce, and a few life annuities falling in, the intereſt became, at the end of the war, increaſed only eight hundred thouſand pounds beyond its amount in 1739.

The great increaſe of our export commerce had brought ſuch an influx of wealth into the kingdom by 1753, that the intereſt paid on a debt of near * ſeventy-four millions came to two hundred and ſixty-nine thouſand pounds leſs, than the intereſt paid, in 1714, on a debt not quite fifty-one millions ſterling. And in which debt were included the annuities raiſed by King William, and the bankers' debt contracted by Charles II.

At the end of 1763, after the cloſe of the war, the national debt came to one hundred and thirty-ſeven millions †; being the amount of the redeemable capital; the unfunded

* Intereſt paid in 1714,	—	£. 2,939,000
Intereſt paid in 1753,	—	2,670,000
		£. 269,000

† Amount of the funded debt, December 1763, including the civil liſt million, raiſed in 1726, and the

funded part of the debt, reckoned into the account. In this debt were included of nominal capital, ſeven millions two hundred thouſand pounds, granted prior to 1753; and one million two hundred thouſand pounds, given to the loans of 1759 and 1760.

The

three million five hundred thouſand pounds raiſed in 1763.

	Principal.	*Intereſt.*
Funded debt, — —	£. 125,081,000	4,042,000
Debts contracted by the war, being for navy, victualling, and ordnance bills, to December 1762, and charged on the ſinking fund, -	3,483,000	139,000
Debts charged on the ſurplus of 1764, — —	1,800,000	— —
Debts to be paid off or funded, left by the war,	6,857,000	— —
The intereſt eſtimated,	— —	163,000
Irredeemable intereſt, —	— —	484,000
Total, — — —	£. 137,221,000	4,828,000
Charge of management,	— —	77,000

Amount of the public debts, funded and unfunded, at the end of 1754, the one million charged on ſalt duties excepted, which will be cleared by 1757,

	Principal.	*Intereſt.*
	£. 72,148,000	2,442,000
Irredeemable annuities,	— —	212,000
Capital added the end of 1763, by the war, —	£. 65,073,000	2,174,000

Deduct

The annual intereſt upon this debt of one hundred and thirty-ſeven millions, came to four millions eight hundred thouſand pounds, excluſive of the charge of management: ſo that the war had increaſed the public debts ſixty-five millions; near ſixty-four millions of which had been borrowed of individuals. And the intereſt the nation had annually to pay for this ſum, amounted to two millions four hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds.

Conſiderable ſums of the money thus borrowed, were ſent out of the kingdom during the war, and expended in ſupport of the army in Germany. The expence, however, was not thrown away, as the objects of the war had in great meaſure been an-

	Principal.	*Intereſt.*
Brought over, —	£. 65,073,000	2,174,000
Deduct the nominal capital, added to the loans of 1759 and 1760, —	1,230,000	— —
The money actually borrowed of individuals to ſupport the war.	£. 63,843,000	— —
Irredeemable intereſt, ſubſiſting in 1754, ſince fallen in, — — —		8,000
Intereſt reduced in 1755 and 1757, —		291,000
Being the amount of the intereſt paid by the public, in 1763, for the £. 63,870,000 borrowed to ſupport the war.		£. 2,473,000

 ſwered;

ſwered; though perhaps they might have been better ſecured, had the peace been not ſo haſtily concluded. The objects were—to increaſe the nurſeries for ſeamen—to ſtrengthen the navy—and improve the commercial intereſts of our country.

The increaſe of our export trade, of the vend of our manufactures, and the further encouragement given to the act of navigation, from the effects of that well-directed war, have contributed to draw ſo much wealth into the kingdom, that, under all the additional debt incurred, government were enabled, after the peace, to fund at three *per cent.* what they could not diſcharge.

In proof of this aſſertion, at Midſummer 1775, juſt preceding the defection of the American colonies, the debt, which in 1763 amounted to one hundred and thirty-ſeven * millions, had been reduced to one hundred and twenty-ſix millions; and wherein three millions of unfunded debt were included, conſiſting of navy and exchequer bills, part of which had been iſſued to prepare for the preſent war.

The intereſt of the debt, the end of 1763,

* Redeemable debts the end of 1763, £. 137,221,000
D° — — June 1775, 126,054,000

Capital paid off, — — £. 11,167,000

came

came to four millions eight hundred and thirty thouſand * pounds; and at Midſummer 1775, to four millions four hundred and forty thouſand pounds; making a ſaving of three hundred and ninety thouſand pounds in the amount of intereſt on the national debts.

And I cannot omit obſerving, that in the twelve years from 1763 to 1775, the peace eſtabliſhments, voted annually for the navy and army, were to a far higher amount than they had been in any former period of peace between England and the reſt of Europe. For the ſums voted in the ſpace of twelve years, for the navy and army, ex-

* Intereſt the end of 1763, paid on the redeemable capital, — —	£. 4,344,000
Irredeemable intereſt, — —	484,000
Total of intereſt paid in 1763, excluſive of the charge of management, —	£. 4,828,000
Redeemable intereſt paid June 1775, —	£. 3,973,000
Irredeemable intereſt, — — —	467,000
Total of intereſt paid, excluſive of the charge of management, — —	£. 4,440,000

The amount of the reduced intereſt, £. 388,000 ariſing from ſeventeen thouſand pounds life annuities fallen in, and the diſcharge of a part of the capital of the debt.

In 1781 and 1782, a further ſaving of intereſt, to the amount of two hundred and twelve thouſand pounds, takes place, by the reduction of *four per cents.* to *three.*

ceeded the peace eſtabliſhment for the ſix years from 1749 to 1755, upon the general average for each year, rather more than one million a year; which made an exceſs for the eſtabliſhments, during the twelve years from 1763 to 1775, of fourteen millions *. And

* Exceſs in the navy expence for each year, £. 750,000
Exceſs in the army expence for each year, 420,000

Increaſed annual expence, — £. 1,170,000

Equal, for the twelve years, to — £. 14,040,000

I ſhould be ſorry, if the outward difference in theſe ſtatements of the national debt, from thoſe of Dr. Price, ſhould be conſtrued, upon a curſory view, as tending to contradict his repreſentations upon that head; becauſe I have no ground for any ſuch ſtep; beſides, I wiſh to acknowledge my obligations to the Doctor, and ſome others, for the information received from their publications. The difference, in fact, ariſes merely from the modes of arrangement, in order to anſwer the different objects each may have had in view. The Doctor's principal object ſeems to have been, to ſhew the idle extravagance that had from time to time been practiſed, in raiſing the public loans; and which muſt ever be the caſe, when a loan becomes engrafted into a fund conſiderably below *par:* becauſe that plenty of money, which only can enable the Parliament to diſcharge the debt, lifting the fund to *par*, or near it, will often oblige the nation, beſides paying an annual intereſt for it till redeemed, to diſcharge the loan of ſixty or ſeventy pounds, with one hundred pounds: and when an irredeemable intereſt or annuity has been annexed to a loan at the time of raiſing it, ſuch annuity becoming afterwards

And unleſs the ſhips of war had been in better condition, and the warehouſes much fuller of naval ſtores, than they were, when the preſent war broke out; I ſhould conceive, the fourteen millions increaſed expence, for the peace eſtabliſhment, in the twelve years, or the navy part at leaſt, amounting to nine millions, would have been more uſefully beſtowed, if the money had been applied to the further reduction of the public debts.

However, for the nation to be able, during thoſe twelve years, to provide for an increaſed eſtabliſhment, to ſuch a large amount as fourteen millions; and pay off beſides, eleven millions of the debt incurred

afterwards incorporated into a ſeparate fund, and bearing a price in the market, unconnected with the loan that produced it; in holding up to view the extravagance of the bargain, it is but fair and reaſonable to ſtate the value of the annuity, according to the price it bears in the market.

Now, the object of the preſent ſtatements is, ſimply to ſhew—the ſums actually raiſed in different wars—the terms on which the money had been borrowed—and the reductions that have taken place in the debt, or its intereſt, in the intervening periods of peace; in order to diſcover the progreſſive fall or riſe of intereſt, in the courſe of the century. For this end, therefore, in the preſent ſtatements, the annuities have been thrown into the general maſs of intereſt paid on the reſpective loans to which they had originally been annexed; marking only the periods when any of the annuities have fallen in.

by the war, are ſtriking proofs of the wealth and ſolid advantages which had reſulted, in thoſe years of peace, from our commercial intercourſe with the four quarters of the world; proofs too ſtrong for any ſophiſtry to overturn.

Thus ſtood the amount of the national debt, and of the intereſt paid on it, at that unfortunate æra, deſtined, in the future annals of our hiſtory, to mark the period of our *grandeur*, *ſtrength*, and *opulence*. A ſtructure, which had been raiſed on the baſis of induſtry and commerce; and to that ſtructure, and our happy conſtitution, we owed the extent and union of our empire: which a deliberate ſoleciſm in politics firſt disjointed, and an obſtinate perſeverance has ſince torn aſunder.

The higheſt intereſt paid in Queen Ann's wars, was for the money borrowed in 1711 and 1712, which came to ſeven and a half *per cent.* and the capital to be redeemed, with twenty-five *per cent.* addition; but the groſs capital, however, running at ſix *per cent.* was open to a reduction of intereſt, as money ſunk in value. And in the two following * years, money was borrowed for an intereſt of five, and five and a half *per cent.* on the ſums lent, with an addition of twenty-ſix or twenty-ſeven *per cent.* to the capital, to be paid only on redemption.

* 1713 and 1714.

In

In the firſt war of George the Second's reign, upwards of thirty years from Queen Ann's time, money was borrowed, in the year 1746, on public ſecurity, at four *per cent. per annum*, with a ſingle life annuity of thirty ſhillings upon every hundred pounds lent.

In 1747 and 1748, the annual intereſt to be paid on the money borrowed, came to four pounds eight ſhillings *per cent.* on the ſum ſo lent, and to be redeemed with ten *per cent.* addition to the capital.

In the year 1759, during the laſt war, money was raiſed rather under three and a half *per cent.* intereſt on the amount of the ſum lent, which was to be redeemed with fifteen *per cent.* additional capital.

In the year 1761, twelve millions were raiſed at three *per cent.* with an annuity of one *per cent.* for ninety-nine years. And in 1762, twelve millions were borrowed for four *per cent.* intereſt during nineteen years, then to be reduced to three *per cent.* and to have an annuity of one *per cent.* annexed for ninety-eight years.

Whilſt, in the preſent war, ſeven millions were raiſed, in 1779, at ſix and a half *per cent.* for twenty-nine years, then to be reduced to three *per cent.*

In 1780, twelve millions were borrowed at four *per cent.* intereſt, with an annuity of one pound ſixteen ſhillings and three pence for eighty years, on every hundred pounds lent.

And in the preſent year, 1781, twelve millions have been borrowed at an intereſt of five and a half *per cent.* and not reduceable more than a quarter *per cent.* without the redemption of the whole twelve millions, with ſeventy-five *per cent.* or nine millions additional capital.

The money borrowed and funded ſince the commencement of this unfortunate war, amounts to forty-four millions, with an addition of nine millions, to be paid on redemption; making, ſince the beginning of 1776 *, an increaſe to the common debt of

	Principal.	*Intereſt.*
* Amount of the funded debt, June 1775,	£. 122,954,000	4,368,000
Money borrowed from 1776 to 1781, both inclusive, — —	44,000,000	2,012,000
Annuities annexed to the loans, for ten, twenty-nine, and thirty years,	— —	420,000
Nominal capital annexed to part of the forty-four millions, and to be paid on redemption,	9,150,000	— —
	£. 176,104,000	6,800,000
Deduct reduction of intereſt in 1781 and 1782, on the loans of 1758, 1760, and 1762, — — — —		212,000
Total of debt and intereſt,	£. 176,104,000	£. 6,588,000
Charge of management, about —		£. 80,000

fifty

fifty-three millions; and the intereſt to be paid on it amounts to two millions four hundred and thirty thouſand pounds a year. But a very ſmall part of this debt can be reduced under five or ſix and twenty years: and if we conſider the terms of the loan of 1781, the intereſt of which muſt continue for ever at five and a quarter *per cent.* or the twelve millions be paid off with twenty-one millions ſterling, we ſhall find no money has been raiſed beſides, on more improvident or higher terms, in the courſe of this century. But if to the forty-four millions already raiſed in ſupport of this ruinous war, ſhall be added the unprovided debts, that, by the end of 1781, will be due for navy, tranſport, army, and ordnance ſervices, the loans from the bank, and for exchequer bills; the demands on Parliament, to diſcharge theſe ſeveral accounts, cannot be leſs than ſeven or eight and twenty millions, excluſive of the expences that ſhall be incurred in 1782. And, whether Parliament ſhall fund it in the next ſeſſion, or let the debts run on at intereſt, and an increaſing diſcount, the burthen, both of intereſt and diſcount, will equally fall on the ſhoulders of the public; therefore it may be fairly aſſerted, that, by the end of the preſent year, the money raiſed, and to be raiſed to defray the expence of this war (excluſive of any nominal capital) will amount to the

enormous ſum of ſeventy-two millions; which will exceed the ſum borrowed in the courſe of the laſt war, by ſix or ſeven millions. This additional debt will, at the loweſt computation, require an annual intereſt of three millions eight hundred thouſand pounds to diſcharge it. So that, without providing for the expences of 1782, the national debt will amount, including the nominal capital, to two hundred and three or four millions; and require an annual intereſt to provide for it, of full eight millions ſterling.

The intereſt paid for the uſe of money, when the ſecurity is good, forms the ſureſt criterion to judge of national wealth; for though the terms of adjuſtment may be extravagant to a degree, that are given by timid financiers, in order to puſh the loan into the market, and ſecure the firſt advance; or by improvident Miniſters, as douceurs to oblige the friends of government; ſtill theſe temporary advantages, granted in the conditions of the loan, cannot affect the rate of intereſt to be paid annually for the uſe of money borrowed. What I would from hence infer is, that the intereſt, whatever may be its amount, will always find its natural level, by the proportionable riſe or fall of the principal on which ſuch intereſt ſhall be paid.

Upon this ground, the following concluſion

ſion may be fairly drawn; that, as the intereſt of money, which, from the cloſe of the laſt war to the commencement of the preſent, was at three and three and a half *per cent.* is now raiſed to upwards of five *per cent.* it is evident the national wealth has been reduced, for want of its annual ſupply; owing to the decline of our commerce, and the little employment for our merchant ſhips, in the way of trade; and likewiſe to the treaſure, which, in the laſt five or ſix years, has been carried out of this country, by the ſtate and individuals, to the enriching of our diſaffected colonies, and the impoveriſhing Great Britain. And ſurely it muſt be a very great indiſcretion or neglect, in thoſe who direct our finances, to ſuffer the ſubjects of a country, depending for its exiſtence on commerce, to remain reſtricted to a lower rate of intereſt, than the legiſlature conſents to allow for money borrowed to ſupport the expences of government.

CHAP. II.

OF THE ANNUAL REVENUES FOR THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE CHARGE OF COLLECTING THEM.

I SHALL now proceed to examine the ſeveral heads of the revenue, drawn yearly from the pocket of the ſubject, either through our commerce or conſumption: from whence the proviſions are made, for the civil liſt eſtabliſhment—the intereſt of the national debt—and the ſupplies for the ſupport and protection of the empire: which laſt expences the regular revenue has been ſufficient to diſcharge in peace; and in time of war, the additional expence has been ſupplied by loans raiſed on the credit of the annual taxes.

The public revenues conſiſt of many diſtinct heads, ſome of which comprize ſeveral different branches.

The cuſtoms, are certain rates or duties levied on the various articles of merchandize.

The exciſe duties ariſe out of ſundry commodities for home conſumption merely; taking in *ſpirits* of all kinds, as well imported,

ported, as diſtilled in England; *beer*, *ale*, *cyder*, *&c.* *ſoap*, *candles*, *ſtarch*, *hides*, *tea*, *coffee*, *chocolate*, *retail licences*, *papers of ſorts*, *parchments*, *painted ſilks*, *gilt and ſilver wires*, *glaſs*, *hops*, and *coaches*; with certain additional articles, taxed ſince the preſent war, as *male-ſervants* and *auctions*.

The other inland duties ariſe from the *poſt-office*, *ſalt*, *ſtamps* (wherein the late tax on *poſt-horſes* is included) *wine-licences*, *hawkers and pedlars*, *hackney-coaches*, *alienations*, *penſions*, *houſes and windows*. Beſides theſe, there are ſome caſual receipts from the duties on coinage, and gum ſenega; from ſeizures and lotteries, American revenues, and from the crown rents; together with the cuſtoms and exciſes in Scotland. The ſeveral heads here enumerated, conſtitute the whole of the perpetual revenue, and are collected under the executive authority, without the neceſſity of applying to Parliament from year to year, to obtain them.

The taxes gathered from moſt of theſe articles, have increaſed with our commerce and conſumption: beſides, all of them have, at different periods, had further duties laid on, as circumſtances have aroſe to admit of the addition.

As new loans were wanted, new taxes have been adopted; and they, in their turns, in like manner increaſed. All theſe branches of the revenue were, at their firſt eſtabliſh-

ment,

ment, appropriated, or mortgaged, either to pay the expences of the civil liſt, or to diſcharge the intereſt on the national debt. And whatever ſums were afterwards found, at the end of the year, to remain, from any of theſe branches of revenue; whether from the diſcharge of any part of the debt, or other reduction of intereſt; from its fall, or annuities dropping in; or an increaſe in the amount of the duties or taxes, from the increaſe of our trade and conſumption; in any of theſe caſes, ſuch ſurpluſſes were to create the ſinking fund, and await the future diſpoſition of Parliament. And whenever that fund, or any part of it, was to be ſpared from the current expences of the year, it has uſually been applied towards the reduction of the debt. The remaining branches of the revenue, thoſe not made perpetual, are the land and malt taxes, granted annually, and conſequently can only be appropriated to the current expences of the year. Theſe, with the perpetual revenues before enumerated, make the whole of the national income.

The great object of enquiry into the nature and ſtate of theſe collections, for the intereſt of the people, is, to diſcover whether, from the changes which time and circumſtances have produced, any material ſavings can be made, or undue influence removed, either in the modes of collecting or

iſſuing

iſſuing the revenue, or in the expenditure of it afterwards, CONSISTENT WITH PUBLIC DIGNITY, JUSTICE, AND GRATITUDE.

The cuſtoms are a principal branch of our revenue; and, ariſing out of commerce, may be conſidered as the ſource and ſupply of many other branches. For, commerce being the foundation of our wealth and proſperity, our conſumption, which can only make the exciſe productive, muſt depend on the flouriſhing condition of our trade; at leaſt, to carry that conſumption to any great extent, beyond the mere neceſſaries of life. That part of the revenue ariſing out of the trade, ſeems to be in a perplexed and complicated ſtate, and ſtands in need of much reform; for, though productive of but little more than half the exciſe, the duties of the cuſtoms are collected at a much greater expence. Upon an average of four or five years, juſt preceding the diſpute with our colonies, the charge for ſalaries and incidents at the cuſtom-houſe came to two hundred and ninety thouſand pounds a year; and the net produce of cuſtoms collected in England came, all expences deducted, to two millions and a half a year, upon the average. The fees and perquiſites of all denominations, taken from the merchant or trader, are eſtimated at nearly the amount of the ſalaries and incidents:

dents: ſo that, for a net produce into the exchequer, from the duties levied on merchandize, to the amount of two millions and a half, the charge of bringing it thither coſts the nation betwen five and ſix hundred thouſand pounds; or twenty *per cent.* on the net produce.

One cauſe of this great expence is, that as our commerce has increaſed, and various articles grown more in demand, from the increaſe of our wealth, the prices of the different commodities have riſen; and conſequently, when the neceſſities of the ſtate have called for a further ſupply, the Parliament have taken advantage of theſe circumſtances to increaſe the duty, as far as the commodity would bear.

And the misfortune is, that almoſt every addition of this kind continues to be ſeparately levied; whereby many aſſortments of goods have five or ſix, or more, ſeveral *duties*, *aids*, or *ſubſidies*, to eſtimate and collect on. Theſe circumſtances produce much unneceſſary expence to trade, from the additional officers and fees required to promote diſpatch; they fetter and obſtruct commerce, throwing the merchant entirely at the mercy of the collectors, and other officers of the cuſtoms: the variety of tedious calculations becoming, by theſe means, a ſcience of long practice to comprehend,

prehend, and of much charge to get diſpatched.

If theſe complicated levies were all reduced to one ſimple charge on each aſſortment, or article, in the different entries, the numbers neceſſary to aſcertain, gather in, regiſter, and diſcharge, the duties on commerce, would be very inconſiderable, when compared with the preſent numerous train, attendant and depending on the cuſtom-houſe; or rather, on the lords of the treaſury; to which the commiſſioners of the cuſtoms ſeem only a ſubordinate acting board, with little or no real controul over the numberleſs officers in the department. Whereas the commiſſioners of the cuſtoms ought to be placed, for the general good, upon the ſame footing with the exciſe, with power given them to nominate, change, prefer, or diſmiſs their ſubordinate officers, according to their merits or demerits. But the frequent appeal to, or interference of, the treaſury, which intereſt and connection is continually making, renders the commiſſioners cyphers, or mere agents, on numberleſs occaſions; at the ſame time that the treaſury interference and controul contributes to releaſe the commiſſioners from reſponſibility, the great incentive, among mankind in general, to the faithful diſcharge of their truſt.

There are ſeveral patent places in the

cuſtom-houſe, to a large amount; the profits of which places ariſe from fees, and are held as mere ſinecures, conducted by deputies, whoſe principals never appear; and who do not (ſome of the principals at leaſt) even know the buſineſs or nature of their offices. Theſe are circumſtances, which call loudly for reform; and, if entered into with that intent, might effect much real good to the nation; particularly by ſimplifying duties, and promoting thereby the diſpatch of buſineſs, and by relieving the burthen on trade; or elſe producing an addition, to no leſs amount, in all probability, than two hundred thouſand pounds a year, into the treaſury, without the aſſiſtance of further taxes. And at the ſame time contribute to leſſen the influence of that power, which a former Parliament ſolemnly decided to have *been increaſed*, to be *increaſing*, and ought to be *diminiſhed*.

The exciſe is the moſt productive of any branches of the revenue; and is collected much nearer the expenditure, and conducted under wiſer regulations, and a more œconomical plan, than the cuſtoms. The fees and perquiſites are fewer than in the cuſtoms, and the ſalaries and incidents amount to three hundred thouſand pounds on about five millions, * malt included; being rather

* The malt, though given but from year to year, is under the direction of the exciſe.

better

better than ſix *per cent.* upon the groſs produce. As additional taxes have been laid, from time to time, on moſt articles of exciſe, ſeveral of them want, for the national advantage, to be conſolidated into one ſimple tax.

Of the inland duties, that of ſalt has uſually produced about two hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds a year groſs, and has been collected for a little more than twenty-ſix thouſand pounds a year, or barely ten *per cent.* The ſtamps, prior to the laſt increaſe, laid in 1777, produced about four hundred and eighty thouſand pounds a year groſs, and were collected for about thirty-five thouſand pounds a year, or ſeven and a half *per cent.* Any of theſe articles, that have had additional impoſts laid on them, from time to time, which continue to be ſeparately collected, ought doubtleſs to be conſolidated and reduced, wherever it can be done, to one ſimple tax. The tax upon hawkers and pedlars amounts in the groſs to eight thouſand pounds a year, and is gathered at an expence of two thouſand eight hundred pounds. The groſs produce from the hackney-coach tax comes to thirteen thouſand two hundred pounds, and coſts to collect it two thouſand one hundred and thirty pounds a year.

The poſt-office revenue has increaſed very much ſince the beginning of this century,

and brings to the public treaſury, after all expences are paid, upwards of one hundred thouſand pounds a year. The increaſe or decreaſe of this branch muſt depend on the wealth of individuals, and the intercourſe and circulation from trade.

The alienations, wine-licences, crown rents, duties on coinage, and gum ſenega, with the four and a half *per cent.* duty on the Leeward Iſlands, do not all together amount to more than eighty or ninety thouſand pounds a year, the outſide. Of theſe ſix articles, five ſtand in no need of reform: but that is not the caſe with the other; the crown rents, or land revenues as they are termed, call for the immediate interference of Parliament.

Theſe crown rents were relinquiſhed to the public at the beginning of this reign, in conſideration of Parliament fixing his Majeſty's civil liſt at eight hundred thouſand pounds a year for life, freed from all uncertainties. And the rents being now a part of the national income, the executive officers of the crown are equally reſponſible to the people for their production, and the care of them, as for any other taxes or collections. Therefore Parliament are bound, in duty to the people, to examine into, and correct, any waſte or abuſes, which have crept into this particular branch of the revenue, either through connivance or neglect.

The

The land revenues, or crown rents, are leaſed out under various grants or tenures, and to a number of individuals, at the annual ſum of twelve thouſand ſeven hundred pounds, excluſive of the fines to be paid on renewal: they are parcelled out, in the different counties of England and Wales, into ſix hundred and forty-four allotments, conſiſting of manors, ſmall parcels of lands, and tenements. By a valuation in the year 1751, theſe ſeveral allotments were eſtimated, according to the improved value, excluſive of fines, at the yearly rent of ſixty-nine thouſand pounds, which makes an increaſe of fifty-ſix thouſand pounds a year on the preſent rents; whilſt both the rents, and fines on the renewal of leaſes, never brought in, on an average for thirty-three years, from 1728 to 1760, to near the amount of the rental.

Beſides the ſeveral allotments enumerated, there are in North Wales ſundry ancient revenues, of much the ſame nature, ſpread over the different counties, ſet at three thouſand one hundred and ninety-eight pounds a year; conſiſting of four hundred and ninety-four allotments, ſome of them under five ſhillings: moſt of them have been long neglected, and are become obſolete; but open, in all likelihood, to revival, at a much higher rent, according to the increaſed value of lands.

At preſent, this branch of revenue, called the crown rents, is uſeleſs, or rather burthenſome on the ſtate; and ſeems to be kept up merely to ſupport certain titular officers, under the appointment of the crown, and which anſwer no end or purpoſe, but to ſtrengthen and promote its influence.

The amount realized from theſe land rents, has been charged with ſundry ſtipends and penſions, for ſeveral years paſt; and the little that remained was generally iſſued to the ſurveyor of the woods, to repair parks, lodges, &c.

For the care and collection of theſe rents, the ſurveyor-general, and his inferior ſurveyors, the auditors and receivers, were eſtabliſhed, over the crown lands in England, and the principality of Wales.

There is alſo an eſtabliſhment belonging to the dutchy-court of Lancaſter, conſiſting of forty regular officers; whilſt the dutchy eſtates, in point of public benefit, are in much the ſame predicament with thoſe before mentioned.

Such kind of unprofitable eſtabliſhments muſt have a tendency to create vexatious ſuits, for the purpoſe, at one time, perhaps, of private gain; and at another, to intimidate or perplex. Therefore, it would create a conſiderable ſaving to the nation, and deſtroy much improper influence, to ſell theſe ſeveral tenures outright, and aboliſh the different

different offices belonging to all theſe uſeleſs branches of revenue; offices which neither convey utility to the ſtate, nor dignity to the crown; and the abolition can be oppoſed only by weak, unpopular miniſters, as it would deprive them of one of the engines of their ſecurity and defence.

To hold under theſe tenures, muſt be an injury to improvements, as the rents are liable, at the expiration of every leaſe, to be raiſed to their full value. So that the perſons, who hold under the grants, would certainly be glad to purchaſe from the public the fee-ſimple, at the higheſt value that could in reaſon and juſtice be ſet on them; to be freed from any future demands of fees and fines, and from all vexatious ſuits: and there can be no doubt, but the nation might obtain, from the ſale of theſe eſtates, a very conſiderable ſum of money.

But to return to the remaining branches of the revenue: the * ſixpenny and ſhilling taxes on penſions and office places, produce about † one hundred and forty thouſand pounds, and are collected at the expence of two or three thouſand pounds, a year ‡.

* No place ariſing either out of *fees*, *ſalary*, or *penſion*, is rated, that is under fifty pounds a year; yet that tax is gathered, on one million eight hundred and thirty thouſand pounds.

† Theſe taxes had better, ſurely, be aboliſhed, by a reduction of the ſalaries they ariſe out of.

‡ The receivers, beſides, hold back ſeven or eight thouſand pounds in their hands, from time to time.

The

The houſe and window tax, prior to the preſent war, came to three hundred and eighty thouſand pounds: the charge of collection is five pence in the pound, allowed among the collectors, and the receivers-general of the land tax; beſides the ſalaries to the commiſſioners, and the ſurveyors belonging to the land office.

The tax on the land varies from two, to three, or four ſhillings in the pound, as the exigencies of the government ſhall require. Four ſhillings in the pound is the higheſt rate that has ever yet been laid; and when at that rate, the land tax is granted for two millions ſterling. The charge of collecting the land tax, at four ſhillings in the pound, with the houſes and window taxes *, amounted, before the laſt houſe tax, to about ſixty-three thouſand pounds, with a reduction of about nine thouſand pounds from the above charge, for every ſhilling in the pound the land tax ſhall be lowered.

In 1778, upon the new tax made on houſes, ſeven additional officers were appointed, under the commiſſioners; and the ſalaries of a hundred and fifty-four ſurveyors increaſed twenty-five pounds a year, or fifty *per cent.* beyond their former amount;

* Land tax, — — £. 2,000,000
Houſes and windows, — 385,000
£. 2,385,000

which,

which, with the five pence in the pound to the receivers and collectors for the counties and diſtricts, will make an addition to the above charge of twelve thouſand pounds a year. The land, houſe, and window taxes, before the laſt new tax, were collected (the land at four ſhillings) under three *per cent.*; whilſt the new houſe tax, though gathered by the ſame collectors, and with ſcarce any additional trouble, is to incur an expence of four and a half *per cent.* on the ſum to be collected, adding between five and ſix thouſand pounds a year to the ſalaries of the ſame ſurveyors, who, till 1778, had made the parochial ſurveys of the land and windows for between thirteen and fourteen thouſand pounds a year; whilſt the charge of ſurveys, ſince this new tax, will now amount to nineteen thouſand pounds a year.

The caſual ſupplies ariſing from a lottery, and ſeizures, have latterly come to about two hundred and thirty thouſand pounds a year. There are alſo the cuſtoms and exciſe in Scotland, with ſome inland duties there, to no very conſiderable amount. The groſs produce of theſe articles do not all together exceed three hundred and forty thouſand pounds a year; and the cuſtoms and exciſe in Scotland amount to no more than two hundred and ſixty thouſand pounds a year, including expence of collecting; the charges and incidents for which collections come to

ninety thouſand pounds, or thirty *per cent.* on the groſs produce; whilſt only part of the remaining produce comes to England, the reſt being expended in that country.

I have now taken a view of our collections, or national income, down to 1775, when this rupture broke out between England and her colonies.

Since the year 1776, the following additions * have been made to the national income, to furniſh intereſt for the loans of the laſt five years:—Cuſtoms on goods charged before with duties, eight hundred and ninety thouſand pounds; increaſe on the articles already exciſed, eight hundred and forty-ſix thouſand pounds; additional duties on houſes, ſtamps, and ſalt, four hundred and nine thouſand pounds; and on new articles,

* New articles taxed:

Auctions, — —	£. 37,000
Male-ſervants, —	100,000
Poſt-horſes, — —	164,000
	£. 301,000

Old taxes increaſed:

Cuſtoms, — —	£. 892,000
Exciſes, — —	846,000
Houſes, — —	264,000
Stamps, — —	76,000
Salt, — —	69,000
New articles taxed,	301,000
	£. 2,448,000

never

never taxed before, three hundred and one thouſand pounds; making together an addition to the former taxes or collections of two millions four hundred and forty-eight thouſand pounds.

I ſhall now proceed to draw into one point of view, the whole that is collected officially from the pocket of the ſubject, every year.

The groſs amount of theſe collections, prior to the war, did not exceed — — —			£. 11,900,000
The ſalaries and incidental charges, paid out of the collections, not including fees or perquiſites of any kind, taken from the pockets of the merchants, or others, came to, prior to the preſent war *, — — — —	£. 850,000	—	—
† Amount paid for bounties, about — — — —	180,000	—	—
Civil liſt annual payment, — — — — —	800,000	—	—
	£. 1,830,000	—	—
Amount of intereſt paid in 1775, on the funded national debt, being £. 4,368,000	— —	—	—
Add charge of management, — — — — 77,000	— —	—	—
	£. 4,445,000	—	—
		£. 6,275,000	
Hence there remained, for the ſupport of the navy and army, &c. — — —		£. 5,625,000	

Which conſiſted of the land and malt taxes, and the produce of the ſinking fund, including the taxes in Scotland.

* Charges of collecting the revenue, down to 1775:

Cuſtoms, — — — — —	£. 290,000
Exciſe, — — — — —	300,000
Cuſtoms and exciſe in Scotland, — —	90,000
Land tax, about — — — —	65,000
Sundries in England and Scotland, ſmall duties, —	110,000
	£. 855,000

† Bounties are not to be conſidered as a burthen on the ſubject, though paid out of the revenue; being only given to encourage ſome branch of exportation, or improvement in the annual produce of this country, or its colonies, in order, in the end, to benefit the nation.

Theſe articles *, upon examination, will be found about equal to the above amount; for the taxes on land and malt, clear of the charges of collection, were barely two millions and a half; and the ſinking fund, or unappropriated ſurpluſſes ariſing out of the perpetual branches of the revenue, came to, for the year 1775, two millions nine hundred thouſand pounds.—Thus the revenue, after providing for the intereſt of the debt, and the civil liſt eſtabliſhment, left a remainder for the ſervices of the ſtate of upwards of five millions, the land-tax at four ſhillings in the pound; and of four millions, with the land-tax at only two ſhillings.—In 1779 and 1780, the ſinking fund was rather higher than in 1775, amounting to three millions in each of thoſe years. But this increaſe aroſe merely from an increaſe in our conſumption, no part of it from foreign commerce; for the cuſtoms were decreaſed ſince the war in their net produce, although additional du-

* Net produce of the ſinking fund in 1775 — — — —	2,900,000
Land and malt taxes, the land at 4 s. —	2,509,000
	£. 5,400,000
Net amount of Scottiſh taxes, unappropriated, about — — —	230,000
A part of which never come to England.	£. 5,630,000

ties

ties had been laid on articles of trade. Therefore it is fair and reaſonable to infer, that the great conſumption, which made the taxes more productive, was promoted and ſupplied by the circulation and expenditure occaſioned by the war.

If to the groſs revenue in 1775, amounting to — — —	11,900,000
Shall be added the taxes created ſince the war, of — —	2,448,000
The money borrowed in this year, making — —	12,000,000
And the ſums lent by the Bank, and given by the Eaſt India Company, amounting to —	2,400,000
Theſe ſeveral ſums, amounting to — — — — £.	28,748,000

ſhew the avowed expence of the year 1781: but what the expences of this year ſhall exceed the eight or nine-and-twenty millions, will depend on how much the debts for the navy, army, and ordnance are increaſed, at the end of 1781, beyond their amount at the end of 1780.—Thus much for the collection of the revenue, and additional aids; but the expenditure of twenty-nine millions ſterling, within the compaſs of a year, opens a far wider field for enquiry and reform.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMMISSIONERS REPORTS, AND ON THE EXPENDITURES FOR THE CIVIL LIST.

IT was the expenditure of the money, that more particularly awakened the alarms of the people, and drew forth the petitions from the counties. Petitions the people were fully juſtified in ſending up to their repreſentatives; but which would probably have carried greater weight with them, if they had meddled leſs with ſpeculative points, though they ſeemed to require reformation; being ſubjects, wiſer and ſafer to bring forward for parliamentary diſcuſſion, in times of peace. Therefore it might have been better, if the petitions of the people had been confined to the conduct of the Commons, and the appropriation, by the ſervants of the Crown, of the free grants from the pockets of the ſubjects. Here, I rather apprehend, lay the extent of the people's title to any interference with the executive power; here bounded their authority, and their more immediate right to queſtion, through their repreſentatives,

the conduct of miniſters: an authority ſufficient to anſwer every wiſe and ſalutary purpoſe; and, when firmly and temperately exerted, will never fail bringing to light material acts of corruption, if ſuch ſhall have been practiſed, or any miſapplication whatever of the public money; which becomes highly criminal, whenever it is applied to purpoſes different from thoſe for which it had been ſpecifically given.

I bend with reverence and reſpect before the great executive authority of my country; and wiſh ſincerely never to ſee any of its inherent rights invaded or circumſcribed in the ſmalleſt degree. But the Crown, in whom that power concenters, delegating to the great officers of the ſtate, the reſponſibility annexed to all executive acts, and to iſſues of money from their reſpective departments; thoſe officers are by the conſtitution to anſwer to their country for their advice or their conduct, at the riſk of their lives; whenever arraigned by a charge from their Prince, or impeached by Parliament.

And theſe great officers of government are bound in duty to account to the people for the application of the money granted by Parliament, ſo far as to plainly ſhew the money had been carefully collected, and faithfully applied to the uſes alone for which it had been granted. This is what the people are entitled to know, and is all they have a

right, I conceive, to demand of their repreſentatives; and which Parliament ought ſurely to lay before the public, without being called upon ſo to do.—But how did the laſt Parliament act in this reſpect? In the Upper Houſe, a motion was made by a noble Lord for a commiſſion of accounts, upon the ſoundeſt principles of reaſon and juſtice; yet that motion was over-ruled; and ſo was another in the Lower Houſe, of a ſimilar kind: both ſtrictly conformable to former precedents*.

In the laſt Parliament, the Commons, rouſed by the loud and ſerious calls of the public for a redreſs of grievances, and an examination into the ſtate and expenditure of the public revenue; voted, that the influence of the Crown had paſſed its proper bounds, and ought to be reſtrained; yet that ſame Parliament afterwards rejected every attempt to check and reduce the undue influence exerciſed by the ſervants of the Crown; throwing out every ſubſequent motion that tended to lay open the channels of corruption, if any ſuch there were.

What indignation muſt the people entertain towards their former repreſentatives, who were unable to explain to them what

* Vide inquiries made, by commiſſioners, who were members of parliament, or by particular Committees, appointed to examine into ſpecific heads of expence, in the years 1691, and 3; 98; 1703, 11, 13, and 18; 1728; 1741, 43, 49, 58; and 1761, 62, and 63.

duty required at their hands unaſked! At the ſame time, a majority of thoſe very repreſentatives were ſo infatuated, as to negative every motion leading to an explanation of the public accounts; thereby refuſing to examine themſelves, or even to ſuffer any members of the Commons to proceed to an official enquiry, though many very reſpectable independent characters had expreſſed a deſire to that end, as well in diſcharge of their duty, as in compliance with the voice of the people. However, ſome of the leading members of the laſt Parliament, apprehenſive leſt too evident contempt for the juſt and reaſonable requiſitions from the people, contained in the county petitions, might make the national appeal in the end too ſerious for them to withſtand, did, from ſome ſuch motive, bring forward the appearance of an enquiry into the national revenues and expences, and thereby produced a Commiſſion of Accounts; which was, by a majority of the Houſe, transferred, without precedent, to men who were not repreſentatives of the people, or in anywiſe reſponſible to them for their conduct; and over whom the Parliament, nor any committee of its members, had power given them to direct or promote any particular line of inquiry in the progreſs of the buſineſs, further

ther than the looſe and general terms of the commiſſion extended.

However, this ſemblance towards an inveſtigation of the public accounts, an honeſt unſuſpecting people readily confided in, as intended to correct and reform the errors and abuſes crept in by time, and a change of circumſtances, into the collection and expenditure of the people's money.

It muſt, upon reflection, carry with it an awkward appearance, and furniſh ground for unfavourable ſuſpicions, to ſee this committee of perſons out of Parliament, brought forward by thoſe whoſe conduct, with reſpect to the finances, they are to examine and report on, as well as the errors and miſtakes which time had introduced.

The laſt Parliament ſurely were wanting in duty to the people they repreſented, to be ignorant of the expenditure of the public money; and, when called upon for a ſatisfactory explanation, to conſign the enquiry to men who were not members of the legiſlature.

The propoſition ought to have been rejected by the former Houſe of Commons with diſdain, that attempted to appoint ſuch a commiſſion, ſo diſgraceful to themſelves, and which will be conſidered in the world, as a ſtriking teſtimony of their indolence, or contempt for their conſtituents; or that ſome undue influence had operated on their

minds, to prevent that effectual reform, which the ſame commiſſioners, in a different ſituation, as members of the Houſe, would have produced.

The commiſſion is doubtleſs extenſive in theory, as it goes to the collection and expenditure of the public revenue in general. It impowers the commiſſioners *to examine upon oath all the ſervants of the Crown, civil, and military, and naval, with reſpect to the collection and expenditure, through their ſeveral offices. It authorizes them to ſearch into any corrupt and fraudulent practices, or other miſconduct committed within any of the reſpective departments; and ſhall from time to time report their proceedings, as ſoon as poſſible after their determination on them. They ſhall likewiſe report an exact ſtate of the fees or gratuities paid or given in collecting, iſſuing, expending, and accounting for ſuch public monies, and the authority under which ſuch fees or gratuities are paid or received, and what defects they may obſerve in the preſent mode of contracting for public ſervices, &c. And they are to report what in their judgment ſhall appear fit and expedient to be eſtabliſhed, in order that the monies granted, raiſed, and appropriated for the public ſervice, may hereafter be received, iſſued, expended, and accounted for, in the manner the moſt expeditious, effectual, beneficial, and advantageous to the public.*

This

This was a taſk the repreſentatives of the people in the laſt parliament, could by no means be juſtified in aſſigning to men who were not members of their own body; for it is they who are accountable to the people for the grants and application of their money, and which in conſcience they are bound to deliberate on and attend to with care. And it is thoſe repreſentatives only, who are competent to judge and decide of any alterations or amendments which time and circumſtances may have made neceſſary: but how can they be competent to decide, without going into the enquiry?

Are not the grounds of complaint, that too great profuſion prevails in the expenditure, and too much waſte and remiſſneſs in collecting of the public revenues? Were not the petitions from the counties, the motion of a noble Earl in the Upper, and of an honourable Member in the Lower Houſe, all founded on theſe ideas? Do they not go to reflections on the ſervants of the Crown; who ſeemed to evade any examination before the legiſlative bodies, where they only could be juſtified; and then exerted their influence for a committee out of the Houſe, with looſe and undefined authority, who were to examine into errors and abuſes committed under the controul of the miniſters, and in ſome of their reſpective departments.

Can any thing be more derogatory to the dignity of the people's repreſentatives, and the duties of their truſt, or more humiliating in their ſituation, than for the laſt Parliament to have ſuffered ſuch a commiſſion to paſs into the hands of men not members of their body?

The committee are doubtleſs reſpectable characters; but, not being members of either Houſe of Parliament, how are they to proceed in their enquiry, without the aſſiſtance of the executive officers, whoſe conduct they are to examine into; and who muſt, if they chuſe ſo to do, have it in their power to retard or miſlead them in their progreſs? All former commiſſions were given to members of the Parliament; and every ſpecific object of their reſearches expreſsly declared in the votes of the Houſe; as the commiſſioners appointed at different times, from king William's reign down to George the third, will ſhew.

Therefore it is curious to obſerve, that the preſent commiſſioners are directed to examine into errors, miſtakes, and frauds in the collection and expenditure of the revenue, without any paths marked out to guide them through the labyrinth, in this vaſt field for inquiry; and which is ſo very contrary to the inſtructions given to former commiſſioners of accounts; to whom objects of great magnitude were in the

cleareſt

cleareſt and moſt pointed manner marked out, relative to the army and navy, ſpecifying the ſeparate articles of the navy to be ſearched into: whilſt, in the preſent commiſſion, no other object is pointed out particularly, but the balances remaining in the hands of the ſeveral *receivers*, *treaſurers*, and *paymaſters*; an object extending to no neglect or abuſe, but what the executive authority has power to alter and correct.

Before I proceed to make any comments of my own on the public expenditure, ſimilar to thoſe on the collection, I ſhall take a review of the reports, to ſee if any eſſential diſcoveries have been made, or ſteps taken, that may work any uſeful reform, either in the collection or the expenditure of the revenues, or in the attainment and diſburſements of the loans.

The firſt report relates to the balances in the hands of the receivers general of the taxes on land, windows, and houſes. The arrears owing thereon, the 14th of July 1780, up to the preceding Lady-day, came to three hundred and ninety-nine thouſand pounds; and the balances laying in the receivers hands, in July and Auguſt 1780, including the new taxes on ſervants and inhabited houſes, amounted to ſix hundred and fifty-ſeven thouſand pounds. The groſs amount of theſe taxes, when the land is at four

four ſhillings, comes to upwards of * two millions ſeven hundred thouſand pounds: ſo that ſix hundred and fifty-ſeven thouſand pounds were not more than equal to a quarter's collection on the counties of England and Wales: at the ſame time that the balance in the hands of the receiver for Scotland exceeded a year's tax.

Beſides the ſum of ſix hundred and fifty-ſeven thouſand pounds in the hands of the receivers general, in July and Auguſt 1780; there were arrears to the amount of one hundred thouſand pounds, owing on the land tax and window duties, between the years 1755 and 1777; and why thoſe arrears have been ſuffered to remain ſo long unſettled, the lords of the treaſury can beſt inform the public.

I do not mean to infer, that ſix hundred and fifty-ſeven thouſand pounds, were not a larger balance, than ought to remain with the tax-gatherers; but I mean to aſſert, there could be no neceſſity for a commiſſion of accounts, either to diſcover the amount, or correct the abuſe: for the re-

* Land Tax —	—	£. 2,000,000
Houſes and Windows	—	385,000
Inhabited Houſes Tax	—	264,000
Servants Tax —	—	100,000
		2,749,000

gulations eſtabliſhed by Parliament are ſufficient to bring thoſe taxes as expeditiouſly, into the Exchequer, and on as eaſy terms, as any collections under the exciſe. The receivers general have only to call on the collectors of the diviſions, who are obliged to pay in at fixed times, to their order; and the ſpeedy and effectual means of forcing the money for theſe taxes, when they become due, from the pockets of the ſubjects, are too well known for any to contend, when peremptorily demanded by the collector. Therefore I doubt not but a diſcerning public will readily agree, that the treaſury-board alone are to blame, if theſe taxes are not as regularly remitted to the exchequer as any branch of exciſe.

The receivers general, who talk of their ſalaries as inadequate to their trouble, may depend upon it, that men of probity and property will never be wanting, who can bring ſufficient ſecurity, and will readily accept the office for ſixteen ſhillings and eight pence per cent.

The receiver general for Scotland appears to conſider the uſe of the public money in his hands as the only advantage he has for executing the office, and does not look upon the large balance as more than a reaſonable equivalent for the trouble and expence of executing it. However, as the land tax raiſed in Scotland was ſettled to be paid into

the exchequer, clear of all deductions, I ſhould apprehend it remained with his countrymen to pay him for his trouble; and their neglect ſo to do, could give him no claim on England, or juſtify him in keeping the money for any time, for his private emolument. Nevertheleſs, it muſt be readily acknowledged, that he ought to have an equal reward, proportioned to the amount of his collection, with any other of the receivers general.

The ſecond report contains remarks on the balances in the receivers hands, who conduct the other branches of the revenue, all of which they apprehend are paid up properly, the poſt-office excepted; which, from the increaſe in that branch of revenue, would admit of a larger weekly payment into the exchequer, than ſeven hundred pounds, the ſum ſettled in queen Anne's reign, and appropriated for a particular purpoſe; the remainder being at preſent only paid quarterly. But ſurely theſe circumſtances can never require the interference of Parliament, and the aſſiſtance of a ſpecial commiſſion, to alter and correct.

The ſecond report remarks alſo, that the eaſy duty annexed to the commiſſioners of the taxes on land, ſtamps, ſalt, hawkers and pedlars, and hackney-coaches, furniſhes a ſtrong preſumption, that upon inquiry a conſolidation might be made of ſome of theſe

theſe offices, beneficial to the public; they being at preſent under five ſeparate boards. Two of the boards meet three times in a week, one of them twice, and the other two only once a week. It is true, as theſe boards had been eſtabliſhed by Parliament, it was neceſſary for Parliament to decide on the abolition, or alteration, that may take place concerning them; but the extent of their duty, and the time that duty took up, muſt have been long known to the treaſury; and it was in their power to have propoſed to the Commons ſuch ſavings, as might reſult from throwing more of theſe taxes into the hands of one ſet of commiſſioners; at leaſt a ſpecial commiſſion could not be wanted for this trifling reform.

The third report goes to an examination into the ſtate of the balances which uſually lay in the hands of the treaſurer of the navy. The different balances in his hands, brought into one ſum, will appear conſiderable, and are more than could be at all neceſſary, if the mode of appropriating the iſſues from the treaſury was altered. Theſe iſſues are made to the treaſurer of the navy, at the requiſition of the navy-board, and conſiſt of three ſeparate branches, *the Pay*, *the Caſhier's*, and *the Victualling*. In the firſt are contained the wages for ſeamen, artificers, and half-pay; in the ſecond are paid the navy bills, and demands for wear and

tear, marine ſtores, and tranſporting naval ſtores of all kinds. In the third branch are diſcharged the contracts and engagements for the victualling offices; but the groſs iſſues from the Exchequer, both for the pay and victualling, paſs firſt into the caſhier's account.

The fourth and laſt report, which cloſes the commiſſioners reſearches during the firſt nine months, relates to the balances in the hands of the paymaſters of the army.

The balance in the hands of lord Holland, or his executors, from June 1765, the time his lordſhip quitted the office, down to December 1777, amounted to four hundred and fifty thouſand pounds; in 1778, two hundred and two thouſand pounds of the above ſum were paid; and from December 1778 to December 1780, two hundred and forty-eight thouſand pounds remained in the hands of the executors.

The balances in the hands of the paymaſters, or their repreſentatives, from lord Holland, down to Mr. Rigby, came to about one hundred and twenty thouſand pounds all together.

The ſimple intereſt on lord Holland's balances, calculated at four pounds per cent. for each year, amounted to two hundred

and

and forty-eight thouſand pounds; and the intereſt on the other paymaſters balances, to forty-ſix thouſand pounds; which, for the fifteen years, from 1765 to 1780, is a loſs to the public of nineteen or twenty thouſand pounds a year. This ſum is an object worth ſaving; and, whilſt the ſtate is paying intereſt for exchequer bills, for votes of credit, or for advance on the land tax, it is highly improper to ſuffer any balances, to a conſiderable amount, to lay in the hands of either the receivers or paymaſters; eſpecially when, at this day, iſſues are to be made on the ſhorteſt notice at the exchequer, through the aſſiſtance of the bank.

And if the treaſurer of the navy was indiſcriminately to apply his caſh to the payments for either of the three branches, inſtead of keeping ſeparate caſh accounts for each of them, and if other branches of expenditure were to do the ſame, the balances in the treaſurers or paymaſters hands never need be to any conſiderable amount.

However neceſſary theſe large advances to paymaſters might have been formerly, the intercourſe government now holds with the bank, makes any real iſſues uſeleſs, except for paying wages of different kinds; as all larger ſums would be beſt diſcharged by drafts on the bank.

The

The idea of difficulties ariſing in the balancing theſe caſh accounts, at any particular period, ſeems rather unaccountable. If the balances in the hands of a treaſurer or paymaſter, and his clerks, are ſtruck, and found to be bona fide in their poſſeſſions, no difficulty could be made by the ſucceſſor in receiving the balances, and taking on him the truſt. The treaſurer and paymaſter are only reſponſible for defalcation in their pay clerks; all other payments, made to ſpecific orders, are cleared as they go: and no great embarraſſments could ariſe to the adjuſting the pay clerks balances at the ſeveral pay offices in town, or at the different dock-yards, if the ſervants of the Crown were ſo inclined.

The agents of regiments, after they have received any ſum authoritatively, can draw no embarraſſment on the paymaſter; and when any pay clerk has been ſuſpected of embezzlement, there has been very little trouble or time required to bring his account to a balance, and to aſcertain very accurately to what amount he has been a defaulter.

There can be no doubt but the accounts of theſe great treaſurers and paymaſters might be adjuſted, and paſſed more expeditiouſly, than has uſually been the caſe.

The idea of a paymaſter withholding the public money, in conſequence of an official diſpute,

diſpute, that may laſt for years, between him and one of his deputies, ſeems too injurious to the public intereſt, for any ſervant of the ſtate to connive at.

This plea or pretence to withhold the public money is further aggravated, by a paymaſter for the army having been ſuffered to keep back four hundred and fifty thouſand pounds for twelve or thirteen years, and two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds for two years paſt; at the ſame time that the amount acknowledged to be in litigation does not exceed ſeventy-five thouſand pounds.

Parliament are bound in duty to take care that every poſſible check ſhall be eſtabliſhed, to prevent material embezzlements; but it muſt lay with the head department of the *finances* to determine what ſums of the unexpended money ſhall be ſuffered to paſs from time to time out of the exchequer, into the hands of the treaſurers and paymaſters.

Difficulties will be raiſed, where errors and abuſes, which time and cuſtom have ſanctified, are brought forward to be aboliſhed, or reformed; becauſe the private intereſts of many individuals will be liable to ſuffer from ſuch ſteps.

And whenever the executive officers of the Crown ſhall truſt the ſecurity of their power, or the concealment of their miſconduct,

conduct, to the aſſiſtance and ſupport which ſecret influence affords, they will be averſe in their hearts to that effectual reform, which goes to root out ſuch influence, whatever appearances they may outwardly aſſume.

Theſe reports as yet have gone to no material reform; for though a ſaving of ſixty or ſeventy thouſand pounds a year might ariſe from any conſiderable balances being no longer ſuffered to lay in the hands of the receivers, treaſurers, and pay-maſters; ſtill the practice can never be effectually prevented, but by proper exertions on the part of the treaſury-board.

And their lordſhips, I conceive, had no ſort of occaſion to give the commiſſioners nine months tedious reſearches, to remedy an evil which the attention of the treaſury-board only can effectually prevent. Therefore theſe reſearches have done little more as yet, than to amuſe the public, and contribute to lull their fears aſleep; which have been done effectually; for the honeſt, unſuſpecting mind flatters himſelf reformation is at work, and quietly waits the event. May men of thoſe opinions find in the end they have not been miſtaken!

I ſhall now proceed, having, I hope, candidly commented on the reports, to make ſome remarks on the different branches of the expenditure; which, with the regular

revenues, and the temporary loans made under the faith and ſecurity of Parliament, amount for this year to almoſt twenty-nine millions ſterling.

Of this enormous ſum, upwards of a million of pounds ſterling * are expended in the gathering in the revenue, including bounties given for the encouragement of different productions uſeful in trade and manufactures.

In the iſſuing and diſpoſal of the remaining twenty-ſeven millions and a half, for the ſeveral uſes and demands of government, and afterwards auditing that expenditure; the ſalaries and incidental charges of the public offices, through which this vaſt ſum paſſes, to the final cloſe of the accounts; with the fees, perquiſites, gratuities, and penſions, paid by the way out of the public money, will, I may venture to aſſert, amount to one million four † or five

* This million does not include any of the fees or perquiſites of offices, paid by the merchant or others, for which no allowance is made out of the revenue.

† This includes the civil eſtabliſhments, for iſſuing and auditing the public expenditure; for the admiralty, and its ſubordinate boards of navy, victualling, &c.; likewiſe for the ſeveral dock-yards, with the naval ſtorekeepers, and agent victuallers; for the army paymaſters and their clerks, and the commiſſaries and agents; with the civil eſtabliſhment belonging to the board of ordnance; the charge incurred

five hundred thouſand pounds more; making, together with the charge of collecting, two millions and a half ſterling: and the twenty-ſix millions, which remain, are left to defray the expence of the civil liſt, of the naval and military eſtabliſhments for the current year, and the intereſt of the national debt.

The expences for the civil liſt eſtabliſhment was ſettled, in the beginning of the preſent reign, at eight hundred thouſand pounds a year.—In 1769, it was five hundred and thirteen thouſand pounds in arrear; which a former Parliament very indulgently diſcharged. In the ſucceeding eight years, the civil liſt was again in arrears to the amount of ſix hundred and eighteen thouſand pounds; which the laſt Parliament, following their predeceſſors example, diſcharged, without inquiry or heſitation, or any ſtep taken to ſearch out the cauſes of theſe frequent great deficiencies, in order to diſcover whether they aroſe from waſte, extravagance, or improper penſions, or any other miſconduct in the ſer-

curred for paying intereſt at the bank, and other public funds; the intereſt paid for anticipating the revenues, from time to time, and on the unfunded debts contracted by government; ſuch as intereſt on navy and exchequer bills, &c. with all the fees, perquiſites, and allowances granted in the ſettling and adjuſting the different accounts.

vants of the crown. And they not only paid the arrears with the people's money, without knowing if they were juſtified in ſo doing, but ſettled one hundred thouſand pounds, in addition to the civil liſt, during his Majeſty's life.

Queen Anne, excluſive of the allowances for the branches of the Royal Family, had but ſix hundred thouſand pounds a year for the maintenance of her houſhold, and the dignity of the Crown.

Of the two laſt Kings, George the Firſt had but ſix hundred and eighty thouſand pounds, excluſive of the allowances to the Royal Family, under every additional aſſiſtance, through his reign; and George the Second had, excluſive of the allowances to his Queen and Royal Family, ſix hundred and eighty-ſeven thouſand pounds, upon the average for thirty-three years, reckoning in every additional grant or aſſiſtance obtained through the courſe of his reign.

Theſe two laſt Kings, from their attachments and viſits to their native country, incurred conſiderable expences the preſent King has avoided; and which the nation were not bound either in juſtice or generoſity to provide for.

The preſent King had, from his acceſſion, the latter end of 1760, a ſettled income of eight hundred thouſand pounds, ſubject to no uncertainties; and, after pro-

viding for his Queen, his Mother, and the reſt of the Royal Family, full ſix hundred and ſixty thouſand pounds a year remained. By the death of his brother, the Duke of York, in 1767, twelve thouſand pounds a year fell in to the King: In 1769, five hundred and thirteen thouſand pounds were given by Parliament to pay his debts, which, upon the average amount for the firſt eight years of his reign, made the King's expences, after providing for the Queen and Royal Family, ſeven hundred and thirty thouſand pounds a year. In 1772, the Princeſs Dowager died, which brought the King a further addition to his income of ſixty thouſand pounds a year, making his income, excluſive of the Queen, and the other branches of the Royal Family, ſeven hundred and thirty thouſand pounds. However, in 1777, a freſh application was made to Parliament, for the diſcharge of his Majeſty's debts; which, in the courſe of eight years, from 1769, came to ſix hundred and eighteen thouſand pounds, and made the King's annual income for thoſe eight years, excluſive of the expences of his Queen, Aunt, and Brothers, &c. ſeven hundred and eighty thouſand pounds. And from 1777, by the additional one hundred thouſand pounds to the King's income, his Majeſty has had from his ſubjects, excluſive of the Queen and Royal Family, eight hundred and thirty thouſand

thouſand pounds a year, to ſupport his houſhold, and the dignity of his Crown.

The ſervants of the Crown, in the late reign, never had more than ſix hundred and ninety thouſand pounds a year, reckoning every addition, to ſupport the ſame articles which the ſervants of the Crown, during the firſt eight years of the preſent reign, expended annually ſeven hundred and thirty thouſand pounds to provide for; and, during the following eight years, ſeven hundred and eighty thouſand pounds; and from 1777, eight hundred and thirty thouſand pounds a year. Nevertheleſs, the talk abroad is, that the houſhold and ſalaries are growing again into arrears.

When his Majeſty's ſervants have been ſo careleſs and profuſe, as to ſuffer large arrears, in ſhort ſpaces of time, to accumulate in their departments, which the income cannot diſcharge; it then becomes incumbent on the Commons to examine the expenditure, and ſearch into the cauſes of the deficiencies, before they proceed a ſecond time to grant any further aids to diſcharge them; leſt any part of the money ſhould have been applied by ſome of the ſervants of the Crown to corrupt purpoſes, ſuch as might be ſubverſive of the conſtitution in the end.

For Parliament, at any time, to grant an additional ſupply, before the debts ſhall have

have been explained, could be conſidered in no other light, than as a glaring breach of the truſt repoſed in them by the people. Becauſe it may tend to betray the nation, at ſome period or other, by furniſhing a precedent for bad miniſters in future to be careleſs and indifferent as to what waſte or extravagance they run into in the expenditure of their Sovereign's income, ſeeing that without difficulty, or even the leaſt inquiry, they could eaſily ſupply all deficiencies, whatever may be the amount.

No ſubject can have a wiſh to reduce his Sovereign's income, or to controul him in the mode of expending it, whilſt his ſervants ſhall be attentive to make it ſubſervient to the expences of his houſhold, and the dignity of his Crown. But when improvident ſervants run their Prince in debt, and come to Parliament for relief; the Commons might reaſonably be expected to make inquiry into the cauſe of the debt; which would have led the laſt Parliament, in 1777, to have looked into the ſtate of the penſion liſt; and to have aſked, Why the penſions paid at the exchequer, and thoſe by a paymaſter, were increaſed in 1775 near thirty thouſand pounds, and in 1776, ſeventy thouſand pounds a year beyond their amount in 1760? Alſo, what were the amount of the ſecret penſions, and to whom paid; for though their exiſtence

iſtence was not denied, yet all explanation was, contrary to reaſon and juſtice, withheld by the laſt Parliament; they rejecting the motion for laying the account before the public, although the neceſſity of it had been urged by one of the members of the Commons; who accompanied his aſſertions with ſome circumſtances of a very dangerous tendency; leaving no other alternative for the miniſters' defence, but either to bring forward the liſt, or elſe ſhew to the public the falſhood and calumny of the charge.

It may naturally be ſuppoſed, that the Parliament, had they examined into the civil liſt debts, would have aſked, why the ſalaries and allowances to our miniſters at foreign courts were increaſed, from 1765 to 1776, thirty thouſand pounds a year more than their amount in 1754?—both times of peace. Why the privy purſe, wardrobe, ſtables, and board of works, came to eighty thouſand pounds a year more in the preſent, than in the laſt reign? Whether it could in anywiſe affect the eaſe and convenience of the Sovereign, or the dignity of the Crown, if certain uſeleſs and nominal offices, with large ſalaries, were aboliſhed? ſuch as a treaſurer and comptroller of the houſehold—the one without caſh, and the other without power. A lord warden of the cinque ports, and a conſtable of

Dover

Dover Caſtle—now that the charge and protection of the coaſt is no longer entruſted to theſe ports, and their lord warden. A ſurveyor and auditor of land revenues—when ſcarce any lands or revenues remain. A maſter of the hawks—when none are trained, and the amuſement no longer practiſed. A lord, the paymaſter of penſions—that might as well be paid at the exchequer, or the bank, for the ſalary of a common clerk. Chief Juſtices in Eyre, with very large appointments—when the diſtributive juſtice they were to preſide over, the motives of their eſtabliſhment, have long been at an end. Theſe are the circumſtances for Parliament to look into; and which could never be done, conſiſtent with the reſpect due to the Sovereign, but when the neglect and miſmanagement of his ſervants have rendered the royal income inſufficient to provide for his Majeſty's houſhold, and the dignity of the Crown.

Thus, taking in the civil liſt, is the expenditure of near three and a half, of almoſt twenty-nine millions, raiſed for the year 1781, to be accounted for: ſix millions ſix hundred thouſand pounds muſt be applied to diſcharge the intereſt of the funded debt *: the remainder, rather more than eighteen mil-

* The amount, after allowing for the reduction of intereſt, £. 212,000, in 1781 and 1782.

lions

lions and a half, goes to defray the different branches of the navy, and the navy tranſports, the army; the ordnance, and their tranſport ſervices. Theſe are the great fields of profit and advantage to all concerned in them, except the *ſailor* and the *ſoldier*. Theſe are the gulphs to be explored, and to which the petitions of the people were particularly pointed. But the expences of the ſeparate branches of theſe great departments, the ſervants of the crown, perhaps, did not chuſe to lay open to the people; rather wiſhing to conceal them from the public eye, in one general maſs: and the laſt Parliament, either through indolence or complaiſance, ſeemed too readily inclined to meet ſuch wiſh. For, otherwiſe, would they have recorded their reſolution to remain ignorant of what it was their duty to know, by rejecting every motion that went to the elucidating the accounts? and which Miniſters would hardly have ventured to withhold, if the laſt Parliament had been reſolved to be informed.

CHAP. IV.

STRICTURES ON THE NAVY AND ARMY EXPENCES, COMPARED WITH THEIR AMOUNT IN THE LAST WAR.

OUR navy, at the close of the last war, was in a very respectable state; the ships in much better condition, and far more numerous, than they were in the year 1776, at the commencement of our colony, or transatlantic war. This naturally leads us to conjecture, that many ships had been suffered to decay, and stores to waste away, without being repaired or replenished, during the twelve years from 1764 to 1776. And though the war was then avowedly begun, and might have been with reason predicted in 1775, if not sooner; and every circumstance that experience suggested, told us to beware of France and Spain; yet in May 1778, after France had declared her intentions to support our revolted colonies, many of our ships were in a defective state, and in such want of stores of every kind to equip them; that in two months from the

rescript

reſcript delivered by the French Ambaſſador, and his hoſtile departure from hence, it was with great difficulties and delays, much as the time preſſed, that Admiral Byron's ſquadron, of twelve or thirteen ſhips of the line, could be diſpatched to follow the ſquadron of France to America; which, inſtead of following, we ſhould have been there ready to receive. But ſo defective were our navy, that, when with difficulty this ſquadron was aſſembled at Spithead, ſome of the running rigging, it has been credibly aſſerted, were unreaved from other ſhips, in order to promote the diſpatch of the ſquadron.

Theſe are ſtriking proofs of the neglected ſtate of our navy, when the war broke out in Europe; though, in common prudence, we ought to have had the hulls in conſtant repair at all times, and ſtores ſufficient in readineſs to equip a formidable fleet, ſo as to be able to put to ſea on the ſhorteſt notice. And had we been fortunate enough to have our fleets properly arrayed, and ſent in time to the protection of our ſettlements, when France declared againſt us, neither Dominica, St. Vincent, nor Grenada, had been taken.

At the cloſe of the laſt war, in 1763, we were in poſſeſſion of a fleet, that, with common care and attention, might have been eaſily renewed, and kept in condition to come out of harbour on a ſhort notice.

We had at that time one hundred and nine * ſhips of the line, including thoſe of fifty guns, and eighty ſubſtantial frigates, in commiſſion; and building and in ordinary, forty ſhips, from fifty guns and upwards.

From the wear of the war, and from lying in ordinary, many of the ſhips, even during peace, would want repairing, or rebuilding, from time to time. The maſts and yards, if properly taken care of, might laſt many years; ſo would guns and anchors; and thoſe ſtores liable to decay, might, by proper management, keeping always a ſtock of materials on hand, ſoon be prepared for uſe.

* In commiſſion the end of the war, in 1763:

	Ships.
Ships of the line, from 100 to 60 guns, —	90
Ships of 50 guns, — — — —	19
	109
From 44 to 40 guns, — — —	14
From 38 to 24 guns, — — —	64
	187

Ships out of commiſſion in 1763:

Ships of the lie building, — — —	11
In ordinary, of the line, including ſhips of 50 guns, { to be repaired, or broken up, and rebuilt, }	29
	40

But

But the great eſſential object to be attentive after is, the repairs or renewals of the hulls, as thoſe ſhall be found to decay. If the hulls had been carefully attended to, through the laſt peace, our navy would never have been in that defective ſtate, which the number of ſhips, ſo inadequate to the demand at the beginning of 1778, confirmed to all Europe.

By the end of 1779, or the beginning of 1780, eighty ſhips of the line, or upwards, were aſſerted to be in commiſſion; but ſeveral of thoſe ſhips have been found fitter for parade than real ſervice.

In the ſummer of 1781, there were not quite ninety ſhips of the line in commiſſion; with about twenty-five from fifty to forty-four guns, and rather more than eighty from thirty-eight to twenty-eight guns. The ſhips in ordinary, repairing, and waiting to be repaired, or rebuilt, conſiſted of about twenty-nine or thirty of the line, and ten or eleven frigates of twenty-eight guns and upwards.

There have been taken or deſtroyed, ſince 1775, † eight ſhips of the line, two of

† Loſt, or deſtroyed:

			Guns.
3	Ships of	—	74
5	—— of	—	64
2	—— of	—	50
4	—— of	—	44
12	—— of	—	32
12	—— of	—	28

fifty guns, and twenty-eight frigates, from forty-four to twenty-eight guns. Of thoſe of the line, one * only had been loſt between April 1780, and the ſummer of 1781. Nevertheleſs, though eight line of battle ſhips were launched between March 1780, and the middle of 1781, and one or two have been taken from the Dutch, we had not above four or five line of battle ſhips more, the middle of 1781, than were in commiſſion the end of 1779, a year and a half before. Whilſt the Princeſs Amelia, the Terrible, the Buffalo, and others, almoſt as defective, have been reckoned into the [redacted] ſhips of the line, aſſerted from time to time to be in commiſſion.

Can any circumſtances more ſtrongly point out the neglect, or uncommon decay, of our navy, during the laſt twelve or fourteen years? And it muſt be evident, from the ill-conditioned hulls ſent into ſervice, that government have all along been more in want of ſhips than men; for otherwiſe, thoſe fit for ſervice muſt have been more in number: and neceſſity only could ſend ſuch ſhips as the Princeſs Amelia, Terrible, and Buffalo into action: The Princeſs Amelia and Buffalo have ſerved to impreſs a very falſe idea of our ſtrength; furniſhing the States of Holland with a plea to boaſt, that their ſquadron had been oppoſed by ſhips of greater force than

* The Culloden, of 74 guns.

they

they really were; as thoſe two, from their decayed condition, had not the weight of metal ſhips of their dimenſions uſually carry.

The fact is, that after all our exertions for theſe two or three years paſt, ſince the war broke out with France (and I do allow they have been great) the ſhips of the line fit for real ſervice are ſcarcely equal, at this day, to the number of ſhips of the line that were in actual ſervice at the cloſe of the laſt war *. However, by having ſhewn what this nation can do, in the public and private dock-yards, upon proper exertions; thoſe circumſtances corroborate, in the ſtrongeſt degree, the neglect of our navy for ſeveral years back.

From the beginning of 1766 to the end of 1777, being twelve years of peace in Europe, fifty-five ſhips of the line underwent ſome repairs; and forty-two were built, from fifty guns and upwards. From the beginning of 1778, when France openly declared her hoſtile deſigns, to the middle of 1781, being three years and a half, four or five and twenty ſhips, from fifty guns and upwards, have been built; amounting, in the fifteen years and a half, to ſixty-ſeven new ſhips of the line, including eleven or twelve of fifty guns. And within the above periods were alſo built about fifty or ſixty ſhips and large frigates, from forty-four to twenty-eight guns.

* Though five ſhips of the line have been taken from the Spaniards, as well as one or two from the Dutch.

	£.
Sixty-seven ships of the line, including fifty guns, cost about —	2,000,000
Fifty-six ships or frigates, from forty-four to twenty-eight guns, about —	700,000
	£. 2,700,000
The repairs of seventy ships of the line, at £. 19 or £. 20,000 a ship, or about two-thirds of their cost, come only to —	1,360,000
	£. 4,060,000
Remaining	2,540,000
	£. 6,600,000

	£.
Granted for building and repairing ships and docks, from 1766 to 1777, inclusive — —	4,164,000
From 1778 to 1781, inclusive, — —	2,436,000
	£. 6,600,000

The

The building and repairs of theſe ſhips can hardly be ſet at more than four millions; whilſt the ſums granted in thoſe ſixteen years, for building and repairing ſhips of war and docks, came to ſix millions ſix hundred thouſand pounds.

As 67 ſhips, of 50 guns and upwards, have been built ſince the beginning of 1766, it is ſcarcely poſſible for 70 ſhips of the line to have undergone repairs any thing near equal to two-thirds of their original coſt, and our navy be, at this day, neither more numerous, or in better, if ſo good condition, as at the cloſe of the laſt war. If ſuch ſtout repairs had taken place, we ought to have had 140 ſail, of 50 guns and upwards; and no crazy ſhips among them: therefore I apprehend it will be difficult to account, under the head of buildings and repairs, for ſo much even as four millions.

In the deſcription of the ſhips, ſome little errors of time, or rates, or numbers, may be found; but none of conſequence enough to affect the leading arguments here maintained.

The grants in the naval department, for building and repairs of ſhips and docks, have been conſidered by parliament as confined ſo ſpecifically to thoſe uſes †, that even the pay of the eſtabliſhed officers of the ſeveral dock-yards, has been always provided for,

† Therefore, the burning of cordage and ſails cannot affect the money, I apprehend, appropriated for the hulls of the ſhips.

under the head of ordinary; which likewiſe includes other expences incurred in and about the dock-yards, as the extracts of ſome of the articles under that head will ſhew; ſuch as the eſtabliſhments for the yards, the wages and proviſions for officers and men ſerving on board the ſhips in ordinary, the charge for harbour moorings and rigging, and for the common repairs of his Majeſty's ſhips in ordinary. Theſe ſeveral articles of expence, in the laſt peace, were not leſs than two hundred and thirty thouſand pounds * a year: and the annual amount of the ordinary of the navy, during the twelve years of peace from 1764 to 1775, came, on the average, to four hundred and twelve thouſand pounds †.

* Under the head of ordinary, are the following charges for 1776:

To the ſix dock-yards, — —	£. 24,598
Wages for ſhips and veſſels in ordinary, —	42,529
Victuals to officers and men ſerving in ordinary,	18,815
For harbour moorings and rigging, —	40,450
Ordinary repairs for his Majeſty's ſhips in ordinary, — — — —	113,442
	£. 239,834

† Total amount of the ordinary of the navy, for twelve years, from 1764 to 1775, £. 4,944,000
Average for each year, — £. 412,000 — —
Total of the ordinary of the navy for ſix years, from 1750 to 1755, — — — £. 1,700,000
Average for each year, — £. 283,000
Exceſs £. 129,000.

Yet,

Yet, during the ſix years of peace, from 1750 to 1755, the ordinary of the navy came to no more than two hundred and eighty-three thouſand pounds a year, on the average; which makes an exceſs of one hundred and twenty-nine thouſand pounds a year, during the laſt peace—And yet our navy appears to have been in a worſe condition, in all reſpects, at the commencement of the preſent, than of the former war.

The records of Parliament inform us, that in ſix years of peace, from 1750 to 1755, the money granted to build and repair ſhips of war came to no more than ſix hundred and forty thouſand pounds, or one hundred and ſeven thouſand pounds a year; which were found ſufficient to preſerve the ſhips in ſuch good condition, that, from the breaking out of the war in 1756, to the end of it in 1763, no more than one million five hundred thouſand pounds were required of Parliament for building and repairing ſhips, during thoſe years of active ſervice; this was not quite two hundred thouſand pounds a year; yet ſufficient to leave eleven ſhips of the line upon the ſtocks *; and amounted,

* Grants from 1750 to 1755, for building and repairing ſhips and docks, being ſix years, — — £. 640,000
Grants in the eight years from 1756 to 1763, — — — 1,508,000

£. 2,148,000

Equal to £. 153,000, on the average, for each year.

for the fourteen years from 1750 to 1763, to no more, on the average, than one hundred and fifty-three thouſand pounds for each year.

Whilſt, from 1766 to 1781, being twelve years of peace, and four of war in Europe, the money granted for building and repairing ſhips and docks, came to ſix millions ſix hundred thouſand pounds, or four hundred and twelve thouſand pounds a year; ſufficient to have built one hundred and fifty ſhips of the line, and one hundred and twenty, or more, ſtout frigates; and left a larger ſum than could be wanted to make any neceſſary alterations or additions to the docks, to receive, and repair them in.

When ſuch extenſive grants come to be contraſted with thoſe in the fourteen years from 1750 to 1763, it muſt ſtrike us with aſtoniſhment, to know our fleet had been ſo defective, and unequal to its ſtrength and condition at the cloſe of the laſt, when the preſent war broke out in Europe.

Theſe ſtatements are ſufficient to raiſe doubts and ſuſpicions, as to the appropriation of the money granted for the ſole purpoſe of building and repairing the hulls of the men of war. But thoſe doubts have been increaſed by the pains taken to ward off all inquiry into the naval expenditure, at leaſt to any effectual explanation.

In ſhort, during the laſt parliament, all attempts to obtain a ſatisfactory account of the diſpoſal of the money granted to keep our navy in good repair, were eluded. Even the motion made for examining the ſurveyor of the navy, as to the condition of the ſhips, was rejected.

Such conduct, from whatever motives it may proceed, joined to the enormous ſums that have been granted to build and repair the ſhips of war, will naturally lead men to ſuſpect the money had been applied to uſes foreign to thoſe for which it had been given.

And, unleſs the money has been otherwiſe applied, it muſt be difficult to account for the weak ſtate of the navy, when the war begun in Europe *.

If there has been no neglect or miſmanagement; if the money has been conſtantly applied to build or repair the ſhips of war; and the diſtreſs aroſe from *a ſudden unexampled decay of timbers*; from cauſes not to have been foreſeen, or prevented; it would ſurely have been prudent and wiſe in miniſters, for their own reputation, and the general ſatisfaction of the public, to have

* Beſides the ſums already enumerated, the navy debt, by the end of the fifth year of the war in America, and the third from the rupture with France, came to double the amount of that debt, at the end of the laſt war, or during any one year of it.

made thoſe cauſes, and the application of the money, clearly appear; which might eaſily have been done.

The recorded ſtate of the ſhips, and the decay of timber, the ſurveyor of the navy muſt have been capable of proving; and the office-books would certainly have ſhewn, without much time or trouble, the quantity brought each year into the reſpective dock-yards, of *timber, plank, iron, bolts, nails, pitch, turpentine, roſin, paint, oakum, and any other materials uſed in building or repairing the men of war; the coſt of theſe articles, and the annual amount of pay to working ſhipwrights, joiners, caulkers, painters, ſmiths, &c.; with the coſt of his Majeſty's ſhips or veſſels launched from merchant yards*, would have enabled parliament to judge, with ſufficient accuracy, of the application of thoſe grants.

No ſupplies can be voted for purpoſes of higher conſequence to Great Britain, than thoſe given to keep the hulls of our ſhips in a condition for ſervice, whenever called for. The importance of this object muſt be evident to every man in the kingdom; as money alone, without the aſſiſtance of much time, cannot repleniſh or provide the neceſſary ſupply, when the ſhips have been ſuffered to fall into decay. Theſe certainly were the ſentiments of the miniſter at the end of the laſt war; for, in ſtating the eſtimates for 1765, he obſerved, *The peace eſtabliſhment*

eſtabliſhment for the navy was enlarged, being the moſt conſtitutional force, and beſt ſecurity for Great Britain; and therefore one hundred thouſand pounds a year more than before were to be employed in ſhip-building, to keep the navy on a footing to be reſpected by all Europe.

This was ſo far from being the condition of the ſhips, at the end of thirteen or fourteen years, that they were found to be in ſuch a weak ſtate, as to be *deſpiſed by all Europe.* Yet the reflection of what has been done towards the increaſe of the navy ſince the war broke out, muſt add to our aſtoniſhment at the defective ſtate the ſhips were in when that war began; and teach us to lament, leſt thoſe exertions may have come too late, which, if attended to in time, would have given us a decided ſuperiority over the fleets of France and Spain, in whatever part of the world they might be collected.

Our navy is eſſentially neceſſary for the ſafety and protection of the empire; the ſecurity of our commerce depends entirely upon it. Therefore it was unpardonable not to be prepared for every event that might happen, from the deliberate rupture with our colonies.

If our naval force, at the commencement of the war in America, had been in the condition the liberal grants to ſupport it, gave us every reaſon to expect; the full diſplay of that

that ſtrength, in the beginning of the conteſt, had, in all probability, prevented any foreign powers from openly leaguing with our revolted colonies; and thereby ſtopped the breaking out of the war in Europe; which France and Spain were tempted to embark in, merely from the neglect of our navy. Spain, at leaſt, would have ventured, on no other ground, to declare againſt us; for to this day, that power has formed no league with North America. And if France, from her reſtleſs and ambitious temper, had been imprudent enough to join the revolters againſt us, ſhe muſt have yielded, early in the ſtruggle, to our ſuperior force at ſea. A ſuperiority eaſy to have been obtained, if we had been ſufficiently prepared at the outſet; though difficult now to recover.

A maritime ſtate ought always to bear in mind the following truth; happy would it have been for us, if miniſters and parliament had done ſo ſome years back:—That the nation who commands upon the ocean, will command the trade that paſſes through it. For without ſuch a ſuperiority at ſea, neither our colonies, or other poſſeſſions in America or Aſia, proſtrate at our feet, yielding to unconditional ſubmiſſion, could ſecure us their excluſive trade. An advantage we long enjoyed, the ſource of all our ſtrength, and opulence; and which can only make the

colonies

colonies worth any great exertions to regain them.

From theſe circumſtances, two very natural and important queſtions muſt ariſe in the breaſt of every man, who feels for his country, or the ſecurity of his property. Tell us then you our repreſentatives, who ſurely know the cauſes, why the ſhips of the line, when the war broke out, were not more numerous; and why, of thoſe put into commiſſion, ſeveral were hardly fit for the ſlighteſt ſervice, as experience has too fatally confirmed.

Theſe are queſtions, that can in no degree tend to harraſs or retard the executive operations of the ſtate: They are blended with no factious principles, and originate from no diſcontent. But are ſuch, as the public have a right to call on the Commons to explain; finding that ſix millions and a half had, during ſixteen years *, and only four of them active war at ſea, proved ſcarcely adequate to preſerve and renew the hulls of the ſame number of line of battle ſhips, which a little more than two millions one hundred thouſand pounds had done during fourteen preceding years †; and ſeven of them the moſt extenſive, and hotteſt naval war, this country had ever been engaged in.

* From 1766 to 1781.
† From 1750 to 1763.

The army has been a very heavy expence to the nation, ever ſince the rupture with our colonies; and that fatal idea was adopted, of carrying on a war by land at three thouſand miles diſtant from the ſource of all ſupplies; whereby the expence incurred in the laſt ſix years, from our armies warring in America, will be found to exceed conſiderably the charge incurred for our armies in Germany, Canada, the Havannah, and elſewhere, in ſix years of the former war; as will appear from the following ſtatements.

The

{exclusive of militia embodied in England

The number of regular troops, our own, and foreign, in Britiſh pay, from 1757 to 1762, inclusive, amounted to one hundred and forty-ſeven thouſand men upon the average for each year. And their pay, cloathing, &c. with the army and ordnance, extraordinaries, and all contingencies, paid after the peace, (the *Pruſſian ſubſidy excepted) came to thirty-nine millions three hundred and thirty thouſand pounds; equal to forty-four pounds eleven ſhillings for each man a year.

1757 & 1762. 39,080,330

* The Pruſſian ſubſidy, paid in the laſt war, came to two millions eight hundred and eighty thouſand pounds; and may fairly be conſidered as equal to fifteen or twenty thouſand regular troops, which ſhould have been added to the one hundred and forty-ſeven thouſand men, in caſe the ſubſidy had been carried to the thirty-nine millions.

The number of regular troops, our own, and foreign, in Britiſh pay, from 1776 to 1781, inclusive, amounted to 105,000 men upon the average for each year. And their pay, cloathing, &c. with the extraordinaries, and contingencies for army and ordnance, eſtimated to the end of 1781, come to forty-two millions four hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds; equal to ſixty-ſeven pounds eight ſhillings for each man, a year.

The charge of the militia † for 1778,

came to	—	—	£. 486,000
And from 1779 to 1781, to	—		2,256,000
Making together	—		£. 2,742,000

† The charge of the militia during the former war, came to one million ſeven hundred and fifty thouſand pounds. And for the three laſt years of the preſent war, to two millions two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds; during which time 40,000 men, or upwards, have been embodied in England and Scotland.

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The tranſport ſervice for the troops, and the victualling them on board, are not included in the compariſon, for either war; becauſe thoſe heads of expence are carried into the extraordinaries of the navy.

The extraordinaries came, in the ſix years of the laſt war, for the navy, to between thirteen and fourteen millions; and for the army and ordnance, to about ſeventeen millions; making together thirty millions and a half *.

Whilſt the extraordinaries, in the ſix years of the preſent war, will amount, by the end of 1781, for the navy, to nineteen millions; and for the army and ordnance, to twenty-one millions, at the loweſt computation; making together forty † millions or

* The extraordinaries, from 1757 to 1762 incluſive, came, for navy ſervices, and for tranſports for the army, to - - - £. 13,500,000
For ordnance, - - 2,170,000
For army, - - 14,800,000
£. 30,470,000

† The extraordinaries from 1776 to 1781, incluſive, will amount, for navy ſervices, and tranſports for the army, to - - - £. 19,000,000
For ordnance, - - 3,700,000
For army, - - 17,500,000
£. 40,200,000

upwards;

upwards; and exceeding the ſame heads of expence, in the laſt war, ten millions ſterling, in the ſpace of ſix years; although no more ſeamen have been employed; and fewer troops by forty thouſand have been in pay; during the preſent, than in the laſt war.

Theſe ſtatements are made in order to ſhew, how much the expences for the ſea and land armaments have, in the preſent, exceeded their amount in the former war. At the ſame time, our ill-judged purſuits are very likely to loſe the nation, thoſe ſolid advantages, the wiſe exertions of the former war had won.

In the extraordinaries, are contained moſt of thoſe agencies, contracts, jobs, and ſchemes, which this tranſ-atlantic war has given birth to.

What can be more inconſiſtent with the nature of mercantile tranſactions, or more contrary to the true intereſts of the people, than to have theſe contracts and engagements, at leaſt the greateſt part of them, ſettled by the lords of the treaſury? tranſactions, which neither they nor their ſecretaries can have time or knowledge to examine or conduct; and which have too often been beſtowed on members of Parliament, or others, whom that board might wiſh to favour or indulge; regardleſs whether they are ſufficiently acquainted with the aſſortments of goods they undertake to provide.

If

If the advantage of the public was the ſole object; it might with reaſon be expected, theſe treaſury contracts, as they are uſually termed, would be adjuſted by that office, whether navy, army, or ordnance, to which they immediately belonged; and granted, like thoſe contracts made by the navy and victualling boards, to the loweſt bidder *; who muſt, to afford it, be one of thoſe perſons, whoſe profeſſion it is to make or provide the articles wanted. Therefore, it is very improvident to call in a middle man or agent, often unacquainted with the buſineſs he is to tranſact, and who muſt have a handſome profit on his contract, to induce him to accept it.

Our troops are as diſtinguiſhed for diſcipline and valour, as thoſe of any power in Europe; but our navy is in truth our bulwark. The inſular ſituations of Great Britain and Ireland muſt furniſh ſupplies of ſeamen, if properly encouraged, no kingdom in Europe can equal: and their harbours and docks, for ſafety and conſtruction, excel thoſe of every other potentate.

Maſters on the ocean, we command its foreign traffic; and without the ſecurity of

* No injury could ariſe, as thoſe contractors are required to give ſecurity, proportioned to the truſt, or the amount of the engagement.

com-

communication and paſſage, our diſtant colonies, and poſſeſſions muſt loſe their value.

With ſuch a navy at our command, at the commencement of the quarrel with our colonies, or even when the war began in Europe, as the grants during the laſt peace ſhould have ſecured us, all might have been well at one half of the expence that has already been incurred; which, if peace could not have been preſerved in Europe, would have proved ſufficient to have ſtripped France and Spain of their beſt iſlands and ports in the Weſt Indies, had our navy been in a condition to exert its wonted ſtrength.

The ſole advantages Great Britain derived from the Americans were, from their conſumption of our manufactures, and the returns made of their produce, conſiſting moſtly of raw materials, or articles for re-exportation from hence; and likewiſe from the employment furniſhed by theſe means for our merchant ſhips.

The advantages to America in future, as ſhe increaſes in population, muſt depend on foreign commerce; as her ſituation, and the production of her lands, equally invite her to trade: therefore, had we been maſters at ſea, without ſetting a foot upon the continent, America muſt have yielded to our commercial laws; the only laws, had we been wiſe, we ſhould ever have exerciſed with rigour. But folly and infatuation have tempted

tempted us to waſte our ſtrength and treaſure in carrying on a land war, where no impreſſions could be made, and where every circumſtance was ſo hoſtile againſt us, that the proviſions to ſubſiſt our army were to be carried, as well as the ammunition, three thouſand miles by ſea.

All the efforts on land have tended to weaken and impoveriſh Great Britain; and the large ſums of money, neceſſarily ſent after the army, have contributed to enrich our diſaffected colonies.

Setting aſide the juſtice of the war, the policy and wiſdom of the meaſure cannot be defended. We ſhut our ears to their complaints, yet were unprepared to chaſtiſe them by land; and at the ſame time incapable of oppoſing our rivals in commerce on the ocean. Idly believing France would let ſlip the moſt favourable opportunity of attacking us, when at variance with our colonies; and our navy had been long neglected: a neglect of the moſt dangerous conſequence, from the time that muſt always be required to recover it; which folly and inattention can hardly excuſe; and might only have been expected from the hand of treachery. And, ſince we have got up our naval force in ſome degree, we have not known how to uſe it to advantage. Ill informed, it's to be feared, of the movements or ſtrength of our enemies, we ſeem to have been

counteracted in every plan or meaſure we have attempted to carry into execution.

From jealouſies at home, our ableſt ſea-officers, and ſome of our beſt generals, have been ſlighted or inſulted, and drove into retirement, to preſerve their reputation from the invidious attacks, raiſed from pique, reſentment, or miſconduct in others.

If any thing can divert the dangers that hang over us, and ſave this country from the deſtruction that threatens her commercial intereſts, it muſt be exertions at ſea: and, ſo circumſtanced, ſhall ſeveral of our braveſt, and the moſt experienced of our admirals, be ſuffered to remain on ſhore! The ſervants of the Crown are bound, by every tie of duty to their country, to call them, at theſe perilous times, into ſervice, and force them to explain the motives of their diſguſt. If their reaſons were frivolous, and they ſhould ſtill perſiſt in refuſing to come forward, and exert their abilities and courage to preſerve and ſteer us through the ſtorm, they ought in that caſe to be ſtruck off from the liſt of admirals, with every mark of contempt from their ſovereign, and the execrations of their fellow-ſubjects. But if their complaints were well founded, and they had retired merely to preſerve their reputations; ſeeing, at the ſame time, they were baffled, and too ill ſupported, to be able to exert their abi-

lities for the general good; it might then be wiſe and prudent in the people, if their repreſentatives refuſed to make application, to join in an humble addreſs to their ſovereign, praying his Majeſty would graciouſly pleaſe to remove the obſtacles to thoſe gallant experienced ſea officers ſerving, at this very critical and alarming juncture.

There is not a moment to loſe; a naval blow muſt be ſtruck, or we are a ruined nation. It is not by land, but on the ocean, America is to be brought back, if that can now be done. As Canada, in the laſt war, was ſaid to have been won in Germany; ſo, in the preſent war, it may with equal reaſon be urged, that America is only to be regained at ſea.

We ſeem not to have acted either with candour, generoſity, or diſcretion, with reſpect to America, ſince the defection took place, for, in every attempt to treat with our revolted colonies, inſtead of advancing with fair and manly propoſitions, thoſe who have been entruſted to negotiate, appear to have diſſembled and intrigued too much, ever to acquire confidence.

Our troops have borne fatigue with great patience and perſeverance, and exerted a wonderful degree of conduct and valour. But when diſappointed, or fruſtrated, in their ſchemes, they have, on ſome occaſions, in their predatory excurſions, I am afraid,

debaſed the character of the ſoldier by revenge, and ſtained their valour by uſeleſs acts of cruelty.

Information, with regard to America, has been induſtriouſly withheld from the public; whilſt impreſſions of the weakneſs of the revolters, have miſled us. And now, with all our dear-bought experience, we ſeem to be going on, to waſte our ſtrength upon the continent of America; which might, to far more advantage, be employed elſewhere.

When ſcarcely a match for France and Spain, we have haſtily and impolitically, though I admit we had cauſe of reſentment, declared war againſt the Dutch; treating them, at the ſame time, not as a nation we were going to war with in a fair and honourable manner, but as if they too were rebels, who had revolted from Great Britain.

After the depredations committed on the Dutch commerce, without any of that previous notice, which the intereſts of ſociety have taught the civilized nations of Europe to adopt, before they proceed to hoſtilities, can we expect that ſuch conduct will go unrevenged, ſhould the powers combined againſt us bear us down? What we have as yet done againſt Holland, I am afraid, will not weaken her as an enemy in any material degree; being chiefly the

deſtruction of private property, to the injury of individuals, belonging to different nations; and done in a manner the eſtabliſhed rules of war condemn: rules no nation can be more concerned, and therefore ought to be more ſolicitous to maintain, than Great Britain. If Holland ſhall have it in her power ever to retaliate, can we ſuppoſe that ſhe will fix bounds to her depredations, by confining them only to the extent of ours? It is more than probable that, urged on by reſentment and revenge, ſhe would know no bounds. Therefore, whatever juſt grounds, in our own opinion, we might have for declaring war, it was hazardous, to the laſt degree, to do it, as we were ſituated; and to do it in the manner we did, an act of indiſcretion we may ultimately repent, in all human probability; becauſe it furniſhes pretexts for every other nation to exclaim againſt us; and if we fall, we ſhall fall unpitied and deſpiſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Conclusion.

THUS far, my countrymen, we have proceeded in our inquiry, carefully avoiding all ſpeculative and conjectural points; drawing remarks merely from facts; and making the riſe and fall of intereſt the only criterion to judge of the increaſe or decreaſe of national wealth.

The amount of the public income has been fairly ſtated, as well as the ſources from whence it flows, and the charges of gathering it; with the expence incurred in iſſuing it from the treaſury, and the appropriation of it afterwards; alſo the debts we are incumbered with, part left us by our anceſtors to provide for, and part contracted by our own extravagant purſuits.

A candid examination has alſo been ſtated of the reports, in order to enable every fellow-ſubject to diſcover their tendency. But if our repreſentatives do not proceed deeper into reform, than they ſeem at preſent inclined to go, the petitions of the people will be poorly gratified.

To work an effectual reform in the finances,

finances, ſo as to produce any conſiderable ſavings, either in collecting or expending the revenue, the ſeveral complex duties and taxes ſhould be ſimplified; all uſeleſs places, of whatever denomination, which exiſt at preſent, and ſuch as ſhall become uſeleſs upon any real reform taking place, be aboliſhed.

All fees and perquiſites allowed, ſhould be regiſtered; and then converted to the augmentation of ſalaries in the reſpective departments, in proportion to the truſt and attendance: and no perſons ſhould be placed at the head of offices they do not regularly attend, ſufficient to tranſact the buſineſs. The fulleſt reward might then be given to thoſe who conducted the official buſineſs; and very material ſavings made in office expences, for collecting and iſſuing the revenues, and controuling the expenditure; not, in all probability, to a leſs amount than five or ſix hundred thouſand pounds a year, from ſalaries, fees, and perquiſites, reckoning thoſe fees never brought to any public account: and from the ſale alſo of the Crown lands. Nothing would be found chimerical or diſgraceful in ſuch a reform, nor anywiſe inconſiſtent with *public dignity, juſtice, and gratitude.*

The various collections which conſtitute the national revenue, ſhould loſe all diſtinction, as to the particular branch or tax,

when

when it reaches the exchequer; for there the taxes might all conſolidate, to be afterwards iſſued as from one general maſs; which, when collected, ſhould be lodged at the bank, as the great depoſit of caſh for the nation. No intereſt could then be charged the public, ſo long as any part of the revenue remained with the bank. All diſtinction ſhould likewiſe be deſtroyed, as to thoſe ſpecific duties and taxes hitherto appropriated for payment of the intereſt on particular loans, ſuch intereſt to ariſe in future out of the general maſs of revenue; but to remain on the credit ſide of the national account, until the transfer books were ready to open for payment. At the ſame time, the bank ſhould have every ſatisfaction they could deſire; advancing no further for the public than they do at preſent, which is as far as the collateral ſecurity, under the faith of Parliament, and their own circumſtances, may induce them to go.

Such a regulation would make a conſiderable ſaving, both in the trouble and expence of arranging accounts, as well as in the intereſt paid for temporary loans, and the diſcounts allowed to the bank, for anticipating ſeveral branches of the revenue.

The chancellor of the exchequer, in 1764, *boaſted he had raiſed the ſupplies without loans or lotteries; and conſequently the ſpirit of gaming had not been encouraged, or the power*

exerciſed of diſpoſing of tickets, commiſſions, or ſubſcriptions, not unpleaſing, he obſerves, to miniſters. The miniſter in 1781, *conſiders loans in a different light; obſerving the then loan was indiſcriminately taken, and any intereſt to be procured by ſuch a loan, was a poor compenſation for the fatigue and anxiety of the burthen; and that no buſineſs could be more diſagreeable than ſettling the terms.*

However, I ſhould imagine loans might be made more open and impartial than they have been ſometimes. And it would have been much more beneficial to the public, for the laſt loan, if it ſhould ever be paid off, to have been raiſed by adding eighty or ninety thouſand pounds a year, life-annuities, to the intereſt, inſtead of ſeventy-five per cent. to the capital; becauſe, upon the annuity lives would be falling, and in a few years a reduction of intereſt might take place: both theſe circumſtances, as they occurred, would produce a ſaving to the nation.

Loans ſhould be open to all who can make their firſt depoſit; in which caſe, four or five hundred thouſand pounds would be found as ſatisfactory, as twice that ſum diſtributed among a ſet of particular ſubſcribers; for we may be aſſured, the monied men, taken indiſcriminately, would be contented with a ſmaller advantage, than thoſe ſelected few, who may be idle enough, perhaps, to

conſider their portion of a ſubſcription as a douceur, or a reward.

From the various circumſtances which have been ſtated, relative to the finances, as well regarding the irregular aids, as the conſtant revenues, conſiderable ſavings and other advantages might undoubtedly accrue to the nation by a real reform. For let us remember, that whatever denomination the charges attendant on the *collecting*, *borrowing*, *iſſuing*, *expending*, or *auditing*, aſſume; whether *ſalary*, *incident*, or *penſion*; whether *douceur*, *perquiſite*, or *fee*; public or private; they are alike drained from the pocket of the ſubject: and if preſſed too hard to-day, it will only render us leſs able to bear the burthen of to-morrow.

Much oppoſition would probably gather againſt any effectual reform, from the injury and diſappointment that might be apprehended, and, without proper attention, would ariſe, to individuals. But in purſuing reform, Parliament would never loſe ſight, it is to be hoped, of private juſtice: in which caſe, no great difficulty could occur, in making every perſon, deprived of any legal emolument, full amends. The men of real buſineſs might be uſefully employed in other departments, as vacancies aroſe; and, till that happened, have a fair and reaſonable compenſation.

As to men who enjoyed great patent, or other places, or who held them in reverſion, given them by their Sovereign, the rewards of paſt or preſent ſervices; to diſpoſſeſs ſuch perſons without their conſent, or a fair and equitable compromiſe, would be an act of the higheſt national injuſtice. But ſuch a breach of public faith will never be committed; as it may eaſily be avoided, by penſions adequate to the advantages which the offices produced; and which common juſtice muſt ſecure to thoſe who enjoy them at preſent, or have a reverſionary claim.

Men may be deſerving of large penſions, and, whenever they are, a generous public will not be backward to give what the merit of national ſervices entitles them to. At the ſame time, don't let large eſtabliſhments, ariſing from offices founded on fees drained from the pockets of the ſubjects, be indiſcriminately given; where no plea of merit can be found, and often to the leaſt deſerving, through court favour or indulgence, or to purchaſe private influence; whilſt, in order to tranſact the buſineſs of the office, a deputy muſt be provided, whoſe ſalary or perquiſites are equal to what the principal's ought to be, if, inſtead of a man of high rank, he was a man of real buſineſs and knowledge, and on a level with the office.

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Some general reform is acknowledged to be wanted in the ſyſtem of our finances; to correct errors, abuſes, and extravagance, crept into the collection and expenditure of public money, from a variety of circumſtances, which time and various accidents have occaſioned: no period can arrive, to make ſuch reform more neceſſary, than the preſent alarming criſis; when dangers threaten from every ſide; when our commerce is going from us, and our expences increaſing; as the levies of this year, amounting to twenty-nine millions, and the unfunded debt laying behind, ſufficiently prove.

Sanguine, careleſs minds, who look but to the proviſion of the day; and intereſted ones, who wiſh to conceal the decline of our wealth, may both be led to ſay; Are not the ſurpluſſes of the taxes, after providing an intereſt for fifty millions of additional debt, as large at this time as they were in 1775, before the preſent war begun, or any part of the debt for this war had been contracted? a time when the nation was allowed to be in a moſt flouriſhing condition: And is not the ſinking fund at this day equal to what it was then? Nay more, is it not double the amount of what that fund was five or ſix and twenty years ago? The facts are admitted as to the amount of the ſurpluſſes which create the ſinking fund; but an examination into the

articles of taxation will ſhew, in characters ſo plain, who runs may read, that thoſe reſources are declining faſt, which furniſhed the ſupplies neceſſary to repleniſh what from time to time became exhauſted.

The land and malt taxes, with the ſinking fund, make the whole of the annual revenue, that remains unappropriated, to anſwer the naval and military eſtabliſhments; the reſt being applied to the civil liſt, and the intereſt of the public debts.

The two firſt articles are generally the ſame; allowing for the rate of the land tax: And it is true, the ſinking fund has kept increaſing with the increaſe of the national conſumption; but then the peace eſtabliſhments, our rulers have taken care ſhould increaſe alſo; for, prior to the laſt war, when the ſinking fund was but one million and a half, the peace eſtabliſhment did not amount to more than two millions three hundred and fifty thouſand pounds a year, on an average of ſix years; whilſt the eſtabliſhment on the average, during the laſt twelve years of peace, came to three millions and a half a year—an increaſe that has not yet been accounted for; but which our repreſentatives ought to explain, after the very ill-conditioned ſtate of our ſhips of war, to meet our enemies, in 1778.

But to return to the ſubject of our finances.—The ſurpluſſes, which conſtitute the

the ſinking fund, depend entirely on the national conſumption, to make thoſe taxes they ariſe from productive; and conſumption muſt depend on the influx of wealth to ſupply it: without ſuch ſupply it cannot long continue. That influx of wealth depends on our foreign commerce, and the vend of our manufactures; all which had increaſed with our poſſeſſions in Aſia; and as the population and produce of our iſlands and colonies in America increaſed. Hence thoſe ſtreams of riches flowed, by which our numerous wants have been ſupplied. From ſuch reſources, our accumulating taxes, from time to time, have originated. Theſe ſtreams had gathered as they run, from the revolution, until the preſent fatal war begun.

The laſt glorious war had particularly in view the extenſion of our commerce; in which it ſucceeded, and laid a foundation for induſtry and policy to improve; that might have laſted for ages, had not a ſyſtem been purſued, inimical, nay deſtructive in its nature and tendency, to the views of the merchant.

The cuſtoms, which prior to the laſt war did not produce more than three millions, or bring into the treaſury more than one million and a half, clear of charges, had increaſed to five millions when the preſent war broke out; and brought net into the treaſury

treaſury two millions and a half, and upwards. And the debentures, which are teſtimonies of the annual amount of the drawbacks paid in re-exporting of imported commodities, were increaſed, during the laſt peace, one million and upwards beyond their amount about the years 1749 and 1750. No ſtronger proofs can be brought to ſhew the increaſe of our commerce, and of courſe of the employment of our merchant ſhips.

The exciſe duties, which in 1754 did not reach three millions, in 1775 extended to near five millions: therefore it is evident, that the great increaſe of our export and import trade, furniſhed thoſe reſources which fed conſumption, and kept our wealth from being exhauſted.

The ſigns and marks of our increaſing wealth, until this fatal conteſt with our colonies begun, were plainly to be traced in the increaſe of the cuſtoms, in the great riſe of the rents of lands, which, in the ſpace of forty or fifty years, had nearly doubled their amount; at the ſame time, alſo, the fee-ſimple of the lands was increaſed ten or fifteen years purchaſe beyond their former value. In ſhort, the gradual fall of intereſt, from the time of Queen Anne's wars, the great extenſion of credit, and the eaſy terms on which diſcounts were to be obtained, until within theſe four or

five

five years, all go to denote the plenty of money that came into circulation, more than ſufficient to anſwer the continued wants of credit. Advantages owing to our increaſing export and import trade, the ſource of all our ſtrength and grandeur, and which realized a conſiderable balance in our favour, at the end of every year: and by that means repleniſhed the waſte, and kept feeding the cruſe as it exhauſted. And ſimilar balances might have continued for a long ſeries of years to enrich us, but for our ill-judged policy; which is likely to remain a monument of our folly and diſgrace to future ages.

Facts will ſupport what has been aſſerted with reſpect to the extent and advantages of our commerce; and facts will alſo point out its decline. For in 1779, in the fourth year of our conteſt with our diſaffected colonies, and the ſecond year of the war with France, and the firſt with Spain, our exports were decreaſed five, and our imports four millions below their amount in 1773, and for ſome years back.—But our commerce deſerves a ſeparate inveſtigation; which ſhall in a very ſhort time be laid before the public.

The debentures, the great teſt of re-exportation, did not amount, in 1779 and 1780, to a million ſterling; which, on an average of four years, from 1771 to 1774, exceeded

exceeded two millions one hundred thouſand pounds. And many of our manufactures, and other articles, are conſumed in America, to ſupport the preſent war, which now contribute to ſwell the liſt of export goods, at the ſame time that they operate in their effect, directly contrary to the principles of export trade, by impoveriſhing inſtead of enriching the kingdom.

It ought to be conſidered, that there are alſo many of our manufactures, relating to the navy, army, and ordnance, bring no wealth into the kingdom, though they help to keep up induſtry and labour, and promote circulation; giving the outward appearances, without producing the national returns which flow from commerce. The millions annually expended in war, being profitable only to a few individuals who ſurround the treaſury, ſuch as agents, contractors, and others, whoſe gains ariſe out of the pockets of their fellow-ſubjects. This mode of employing our manufacturers can be no compenſation for the loſs of our foreign trade, both in Europe and America, which is going from us very faſt; whilſt we ſeem to behold the loſs with much indifference; as if we either did not know its value, or were under no apprehenſions of any part of it leaving us: at the ſame time that the moſt ſtriking proofs are continually coming forward to convince us. For not only the debentures

tures are declined, but the receipt or annual balance into the treaſury, from the cuſtoms, is leſſened below the amount prior to this war; although additional duties, to full two hundred thouſand pounds a year, have been laid on merchandize ſince the war broke out.

The high intereſt of money is another proof of our declining wealth; which has nearly reached the ſtandard or level it was at early in the preſent century. High intereſt has ever been conſidered as a ſign the money in circulation was inadequate to the demand; and as foreign commerce, and the vend of our manufactures, increaſed, the intereſt of money, upon examination, will be found to have fell: a proof that money grew more plenty in the kingdom. As money increaſed, the rents of lands became increaſed alſo; and were advanced in value from twenty to thirty years purchaſe, and upwards. So that, for ſeveral years prior to the preſent war, nay, during the laſt war, few landed eſtates yielded their poſſeſſors more than two and three quarters or three *per cent.* intereſt for their money. And mortgages on lands were attainable for four *per cent.* the outſide, under the beſt ſecurity. Whereas at preſent money is with the utmoſt difficulty to be procured at five *per cent.* on undeniable landed ſecurity; and numbers cannot ſupply their wants at that premium.

The value of land has fallen conſiderably: eſtates have been ſold, in the laſt two or three years, as low as twenty years purchaſe, or rather under; and none higher than twenty-five years purchaſe. The complaints from farmers of their rents being too high, are become very prevalent in many counties; and the numbers failing on their farms, or growing greatly in arrears of rent, all tend to verify the aſſertions relative to the decay of wealth. Money was to be obtained in the laſt war, and only a few years back, on long bills, for four *per cent.* when good names were upon them. No long bills are now to be diſcounted, in general, for legal intereſt, however ſubſtantial the credit of the bills; And the government ſecurities unfunded, and ſure of being diſcharged in two years; are at an alarming diſcount, much greater than at any period of the laſt war. Credit too is in a tottering ſtate, being greatly circumſcribed, and alarmed at a ſhadow. Theſe facts are too clear to admit a doubt; and are melancholy proofs of our decline, no ſophiſtry can evade.

Such ſtriking teſtimonies of approaching diſtreſs, as are here enumerated, it would not be in the power of art or management to affect the appearance of, by any combinations whatever, if that great ſource of wealth had remained undiſturbed, the numerous ſtreams of commerce, which the laſt glori-

ous

ous war ſecured, and years of ſucceeding peace had realized, in the opulence, power, and grandeur of our empire.

Our commerce, and the vend of our manufactures, through a ſeries of years prior to the preſent war, had brought into Great Britain much more wealth than the annual waſte conſumed: this ſtore in reſerve, this national capital, if I may ſo term it, the happy effects of our act of navigation, and the increaſe of population and induſtry in our colonies and iſlands, muſt now be drawn forth into conſumption, to make our taxes productive, and furniſh thoſe ſums, from whence the demands of government are to be ſupported.

This laſt reſource, our internal wealth, or national capital, may help us out for a ſhort time, but muſt neceſſarily diminiſh, and ſoon be exhauſted; unleſs ſome freſh ſupplies are found out to repleniſh the waſte: and of courſe will leave us, under a declining trade, only the more impoveriſhed in the end. The ſigns of that approaching period are too plain to be miſtook.

If, therefore, our foreign commerce and navigation are not reſtored, our expences will by neceſſity contract: as they contract, our taxes will become leſs productive, and our revenues in conſequence reduced. For the taxes from the land and exciſe, the inland duties and cuſtoms, all depend for their

production on induſtry, and the vend of our manufactures; on merchandize, and the employment of our ſhipping: for, without this chain of circumſtances to promote and feed exceſs and diſſipation, our wants muſt ſoon remain unſatisfied; and conſumption decline, of courſe. Therefore, taxes collected on articles of conſumption, cannot come in proof of the increaſe of wealth, but merely of the waſte of it.

As neceſſity narrows our conſumption, our preſent wonderful ſyſtem of taxation will be circumſcribed. The melancholy period, I fear, is not far off, when that ſyſtem muſt contract; the building totters; nor can it furniſh ſupplies much longer for the heavy expence of the war, and the debts we have not only incurred ourſelves, but thoſe alſo our anceſtors left us to diſcharge. For though the fiat of power may create taxes, that power cannot make them productive, when the ſources they are to ariſe from fail.

Therefore, if the ſame waſte and extravagance ſhall be continued, as has prevailed for theſe three or four years paſt; if the war ſhall be carried on at the ſame enormous expence, and our commerce, diſregarded, be left further to decreaſe, and at laſt expire; ruin muſt overtake us, beyond the efforts of the wiſe, the firm, and honeſt, to retrieve.

I ſpeak not from conjecture: the proofs of

of our declining wealth are too ſtriking to admit of any doubt: therefore, the approaching indications of our danger ought to ring the alarm, to warn us on our guard, and teach us to reflect ſeriouſly on our ſituation.

Natural cauſes led us to opulence, ſtrength, and grandeur: cauſes as natural, but of a different tendency, will have a contrary effect. The facts which have been ſtated, clearly point out the ſources from whence our ways and means have hitherto aroſe: thoſe commercial ſtreams dried up, the landholder will in great meaſure be obliged to ſupport the public burthens; for many of thoſe, whoſe fortunes lay in moveable wealth, would caſt the burthen from themſelves, to thoſe whoſe property were fixed; and, collecting together at leaſt a part of their effects, would, with thoſe remains, ſeek ſhelter in ſome riſing ſtate, ſome leſs encumbered country.

The country gentlemen, the landholders of all deſcriptions, would do well to look around them, and to reflect on their ſituation, before it is too late; a ſituation far more alarming than many of them hitherto ſeem to have been aware of.

Whenever the day of diſtreſs arrives (and arrive it will ſoon, if we purſue the ſame ſyſtem of conduct as we have done for a few years paſt) the country gentlemen will be left,

left, under the reduced value of their lands, to ſupport the accumulating burthens of our taxes, made light before by our extenſive commerce; but, deprived of that aſſiſtance, the landholders will remain, almoſt alone, to provide for the exigencies of government; and to feed the national creditors from the produce of their lands; at a time, when the price of labour has become increaſed from the weight of taxes, which will of courſe increaſe the expences on their eſtates, whilſt the diſtreſſes of their country are driving them to the neceſſity of lowering their rents.

From the confidence the national creditors have been taught to place on Parliament, that faith and ſecurity, ſolemnly pledged to them, muſt not be deſtroyed, whatever opinions men may be led to throw out in private converſation. No ſuch ſtab muſt be given to public credit: the moſt profligate dare not ſtrike the blow, unleſs they were the moſt thoughtleſs miniſters alſo: as, otherwiſe, they would be ſenſible of the danger of the attempt, and be reſtrained by fear for their own ſafety.

No ſtate can make any great exertions, wherein the ſubjects have not full confidence and ſecurity in its protection of their property; therefore public credit is eſſential to the ſafety and dignity of the ſtate, and to the welfare of the people, in every country governed

governed by principles of wiſdom and ſound policy. For, *(to uſe the expreſſion of the celebrated Monſ. Neckar,) the intereſt of a nation, if rightly underſtood, will always reſt upon the baſis of fidelity and juſtice.*

Public credit is full as neceſſary for the ſupport of government, as private credit is in the conducting of commerce: without credit, no extenſive concerns in trade, either foreign or domeſtic, could be carried on. But credit cannot ſubſiſt without a ſound bottom, a ſolid foundation of real wealth, or aſſets, ſomewhere exiſting within the kingdom, ſufficient to anſwer the paper floating in circulation, upon the ſtrength and ſecurity of that real wealth: which paper, though continually iſſuing forth, is conſtantly returning to be renewed or diſcharged; and thereby puts the exiſtence of the real wealth within the kingdom to the teſt. As this is an intricate ſubject, and various opinions have been formed on it by the wiſeſt and moſt reſpectable characters, I ſhall endeavour to explain myſelf more fully on the great queſtion, Whether paper, the ſubſtitute for real wealth, can hold its credit and conſequence in circulation, when that real wealth is materially reduced? —I think not, and will aſſign my reaſons.

In the firſt place, I conceive that no paper, either public or private, can get into circulation, without the full value being produced

produced for it; for in that pernicious paper, wherein men lend their names without any real property exchanged, the iſſues of mere ſwindlers; till ſomebody has had credulity to advance, or lend real money on the credit and ſecurity of that paper, it cannot get into circulation; and whenever due, if not paid for by the perſon from whom the note originated, he, or his credit, muſt fail. And ſo it is with all the paper, nominal or real, whether payable on demand, or at more diſtant periods; there muſt have been ſolid wealth to bring any of it into circulation; and ſo there muſt be to diſcharge it afterwards; otherwiſe, it will produce an immediate failure or diſcredit ſomewhere. Therefore, this private paper, which is all voluntary iſſues, muſt have real wealth ſubſiſting to anſwer it, of which the paper is but the counterpart; or that paper muſt ſoon blow up, and a total ſtop be put to its circulation.

The bank paper is by far more extenſive than the private, but ſtands on much the ſame ground; and could not long keep out in circulation, without a foundation of real wealth to ſupport it, of which the paper is only the ſubſtitute.

From the ready exchange of bank notes at all times, it is evident, that ſort of paper has obtained credit and confidence throughout the kingdom: but, as nobody would think

think of hoarding bank notes, therefore few or no notes will long remain out, that are not uſed in circulation; and none can exiſt in uſe, but as the ſubſtitute for real wealth, which had been given to draw them into circulation. For the bank neither lends on exchequer bills to the public, nor iſſues for the ſtate, or private merchants, to the ſmalleſt amount, without intereſt and collateral ſecurity.

We will ſuppoſe, on theſe occaſions, the bank ſupplies the ſtate or individuals with their promiſſory notes; adding ſo much more paper to what was before out upon their credit; the treaſury and the merchants ſend thoſe notes immediately into circulation; they then become ſubdivided; part will return to the bank for real caſh, to anſwer the various uſes wherein ſmall ſums are wanted; and part will be kept for a while in circulation. But when the taxes are collected, or the loans raiſed, from whence the exchequer bills, or other debts contracted by government, are to be diſcharged; or when the merchant has been paid for the goods he had ſold; in any or all of theſe caſes, the returns are made to the bank, for their loans, more or leſs, in caſh, or in their own notes, according to the circulation ariſing out of foreign commerce; that is, as the balances accruing in our favour from the export trade, ſhall extend, or contract.

It would be impoſſible to preſerve in circulation,

culation, to any uſeful purpoſe, that paper, the repreſentative of wealth, when the ſubſtance, the real wealth, was done away. The promiſſory notes the bank ſends forth, are not compulſory; they will float about, in proportion to the increaſe or continuance of the ſubſtance, they were originally iſſued to repreſent. And as the amount of the ſubſtance decreaſes, the notes will contract, and return into the bank. As our wealth is drained from us, thoſe ſigns will die away. There is no management or intrigue, united to power, that could force paper into circulation, and keep it at its natural value, unleſs it could be changed, on demand, for the ſum in gold or ſilver, for which it is the ſign; and then it is in every reſpect equal to the payment in coin.

The gold and ſilver will inevitably waſte, and be carried out of the kingdom, as the balance on trade turns againſt us: but at the ſame time, as the ſubſtance diminiſhes, the ſhadows will contract in proportion.

If the paper, after acquiring confidence with the public, ſtood firm without the ſupport of that real wealth it merely repreſents, and whereon its intrinſic value has been uſually conſidered to depend; from whence ariſes the preſent apparent ſcarcity of money, and the high intereſt it bears, comparatively, with the intereſt a few years back? This could not be the caſe, if the

paper could remain to an equal amount in circulation, when the gold and ſilver was draining away; for it would be only coining more paper, as the real wealth waſted, and all muſt be well again; and the kingdom in the ſame flouriſhing ſtate as when the real wealth remained among us.

If this argument was well founded, America would have been under no diſtreſs for money, ſince her defection from the parent country. But it is not within the authority of congreſs, or any firmer legiſlative power, to make paper a legal tender, ſend it into circulation, ſtamp whatever value they think proper on it, and preſerve it there from any depreciation; the reaſon is, the mere act of making it a legal tender, cannot give confidence to it: confidence, which only can ſtrengthen credit, and promote the circulation of paper, is the effect of time and punctuality: paper muſt be inſured at all times its real value; which depends on the certain and ſpeedy means of exchanging it for the amount in gold or ſilver that had been ſtampt on it by authority: the tenders too, inſtead of being legal, and compulſive, muſt be voluntary and free to accept or not; no other method can give currency to paper, and ſecure it from depreciation.

If paper cannot be readily exchanged for the money it is certified to anſwer, it muſt ſink in value; the paper itſelf being of no

worth, but according to the gold or ſilver to be obtained for it. It can carry no intrinſic value to a foreign market; and when received in payment, it is no more than giving the ſecurity of the ſtate, or the bank, for that of an individual; and whatever faith may be placed in the ultimate diſcharge, it will aſſuredly depreciate in proportion to the diſtance of time, and the uncertainty of payment.

What I mean to infer from hence is, that it is impoſſible for paper to be kept out in circulation, that is payable on demand, and its credit ſupported, any longer than there is wealth remaining in the kingdom to anſwer it. Therefore, as our real wealth ſhall waſte, or be drained out of the kingdom, the paper will gradually revert back to its ſource and become annihilated: for, as the bank, to anſwer claims, called in its debts, thoſe debts would, many of them at leaſt, be diſcharged with its own paper.

It would be impracticable to define the amount of the real wealth circulating in theſe kingdoms, and of courſe the extent of its ſubſtitute, the credit that wealth ſends forth, to conduct the amazing exchange or barter carried on through our manufactures and our commerce; the variety of circumſtances they depend on, the labyrinth in which they are involved, are not to be explored. The attempt, I think, would

would be improper; becauſe, if miſtaken, the errors only ſerve to furniſh ground for diſputants to contend; and for all thoſe who brought us to our preſent ſituation, to laugh at our fears and apprehenſions of approaching ruin; by which means the temperate and ill-informed part of the community, and the country gentlemen living at a diſtance from the capital, are lulled into ſecurity, and led to believe the evil at leaſt is far off; as the writer of the "Letters to a young Nobleman" peremptorily aſſerts. However, if that writer is no better informed of the wealth and reſources at home, than he ſeems to be of the ſupplies that Aſia can afford us, there is but little reliance to be placed in his aſſertions.

Though I do not pretend to aſcertain the amount of our exiſting wealth within the kingdom; or the extent of our reſources without it; nor the period of our grandeur; ſure I am, the race we are now running, and which the author of thoſe Letters urges us to run on, will, without greater and abler exertions at ſea, and more œconomy in our operations by land, bring us much ſooner to diſtreſs, if not to ruin, than he ſeems to apprehend.

It will lead us ſpeedily into that ſituation, wherein our ſyſtem of taxation muſt inevitably decline; and, ceaſing to be productive in any degree equal to its preſent amount, will revert back to the ſame contracted

contracted ſtate its different produces yielded about fifty or ſixty years ago; at the ſame time leaving the neceſſaries of life much dearer, and the nation encumbered with an enormous debt, which it will be dangerous to annihilate, and difficult either to provide for, or diſcharge, without the aſſiſtance of an extenſive *foreign commerce*, equal in value to what the laſt war had ſo wiſely and providently ſecured to us.

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT.

order to prove, beyond the poſſibility of doubt or contradiction, the enormous expence of the preſent war, the following comparative ſtatements have been drawn.

he ſurpluſſes ariſing from the different branches of the perpetual revenue, after the charges of colon, the intereſt of the public debts, and the civil liſt, are all provided for, conſtitute the ſinking d; which, with the land and malt taxes, voted annually, make the whole of the national income that ains to anſwer the naval and military eſtabliſhments from year to year; all beyond their amount muſt procured from loans, or extraordinary ſupplies.

inking fund was
en, in

£.
, for 1,786,000
, 1,906,000
, 2,430,000
, 2,603,000
, 1,762,000
, 1,009,000

Thus the ſinking fund, in the ſix years of the laſt war, furniſhed towards the exigencies of government, — — £. 11,496,000

The land and malt, ſet at about £. 2,560,000 a year, for the ſix years came to — — 15,360,000

Money actually borrowed in the ſix years, of the public, — 64,000,000

£. 90,856,000

Nominal capital added to ſome of the loans, to be paid only on redemption of the debts, — 1,230,000

The ſinking fund, on the average of the five years, from 1776 to 1780, has been ſaid to produce £. 2,868,000 a year, — £. 14,340,000

The ſinking fund for 1781, ſet at — — 2,900,000

Land and malt for the ſix years, at £. 2,560,000 a year, — — 15,360,000

Money actually borrowed of the public in the ſix years, 44,000,000

The unprovided debt, that will probably be owing the end of 1781, has been eſtimated at — — 30,000,000

£. 106,600,000

Nominal capital to be paid on the redemption of the debt, — — 9,000,000

Hence the preſent war will, by the end of 1781, have coſt the nation, in the ſame number of years, rteen millions more than the laſt war, without reckoning the nominal capital; and twenty-four milons, that included.